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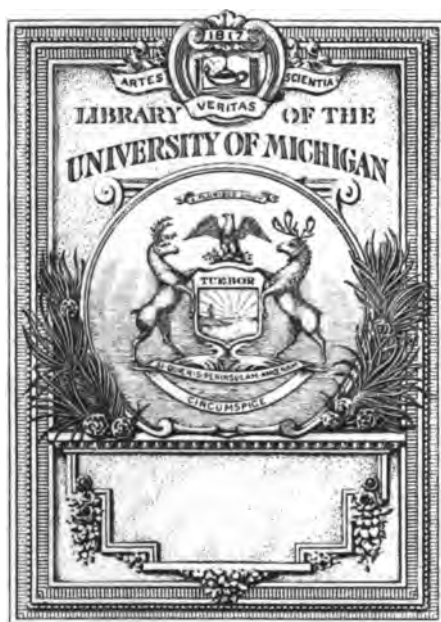
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SELECT
SPEECHES
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM WINDHAM,
AND
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM HUSKISSON:
WITH
PRELIMINARY BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES.

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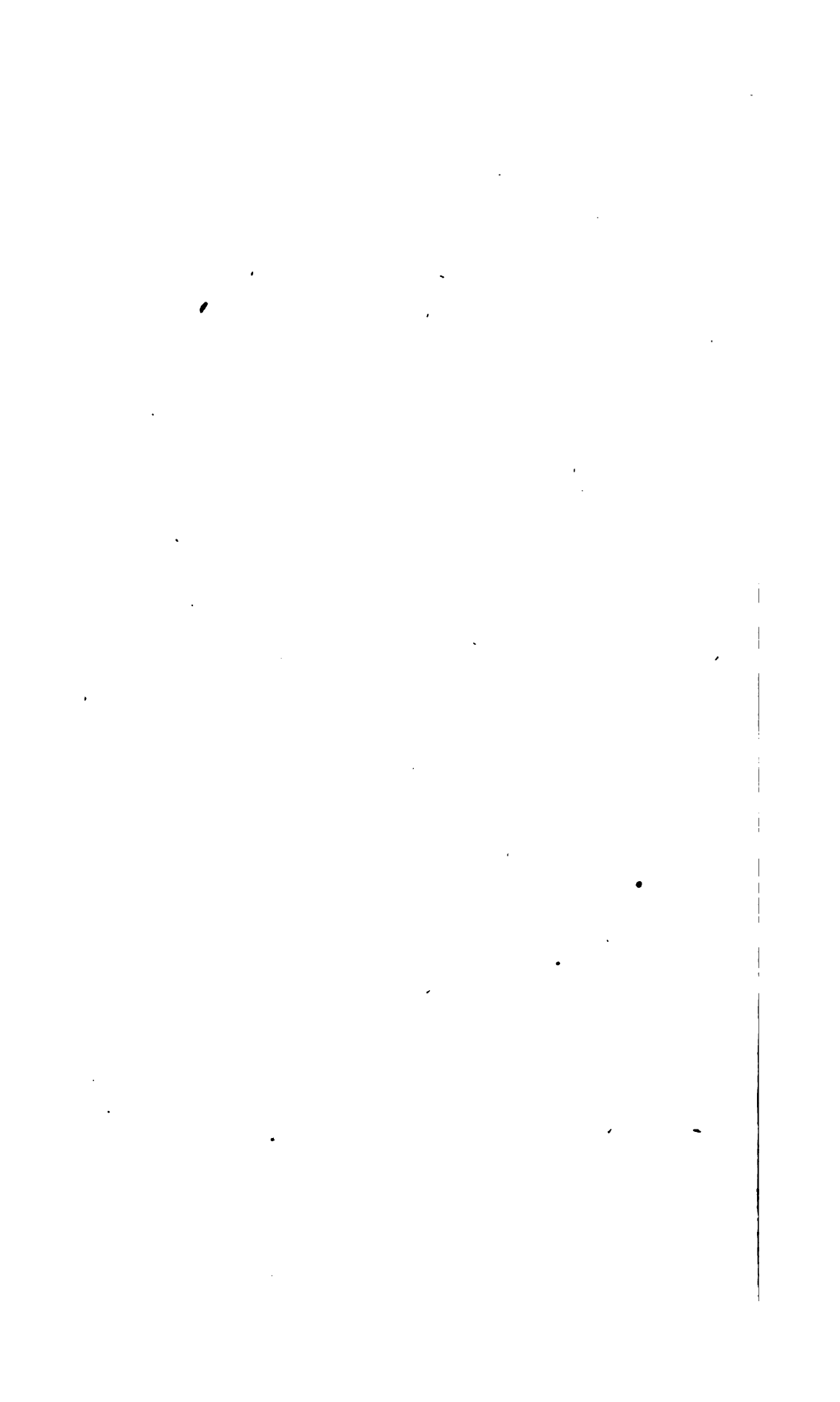
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In pursuance of the design announced in the advertisement to his Selection from the Speeches of Mr. Canning, the Editor now offers another volume of valuable Parliamentary Eloquence. The Speeches of Windham and Huskisson, of which the choice has been carefully made, are well worthy to follow those of the most illustrious orator and statesman of the nineteenth century.

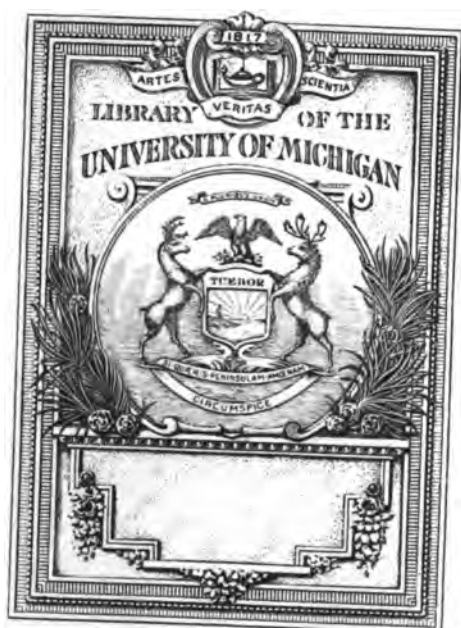


BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM WINDHAM,

WILLIAM WINDHAM was the descendant of a line of ancestors which is traced to a very remote period. The name is derived from a town in Norfolk, England, generally written *Wymondham*, but pronounced *Windham*, at which place the family appears to have been settled as early as the eleventh, or the beginning of the twelfth century, Ailward de Wymondham having been a person of some consideration in the time of Henry the First. His posterity remained there till the middle of the fifteenth century, when one of them, in the reign of Henry the Sixth, purchased considerable estates on the north-east coast of Norfolk, in Felbrigg and its neighbourhood, which, from that time, became their principal residence.

WILLIAM WINDHAM was born in 1750, on the 3d of May (old style), in Norfolk. At seven years of age, young Windham had been placed at Eton, where he remained till he was about sixteen; distinguishing himself, by the vivacity and brilliancy of his talents, among school-fellows of whom many were afterwards highly eminent for their genius and acquirements. He was the envy of the school for the quickness of his progress in study, as well as its acknowledged leader and champion in all athletic sports and youthful frolics. The late Dr. Barnard, then Headmaster, and afterwards Provost of Eton College, used to remark when Fox and Windham had become conspicuous in the senate, that they were the last boys he had ever flogged. Their offence was, that of stealing off together to see a play acted at Windsor.

On leaving Eton, in 1766, he was placed in the university of
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too, of Parliamentary Reform, which had already stood in his way at Westminster, was become a highly popular one amongst his Norwich friends. Still he was not to be dismayed. On the contrary, his intrepidity rose with the difficulties which threatened him; for, besides avowing at a public meeting his dislike to the prevailing doctrines of Reform, he published a very manly address to the electors, in which he spurned the popularity to be acquired by a servile accommodation to changes of public opinion, and declared that he should, on all occasions, make his own dispassionate judgment the sole and fixed rule of his conduct. Dangerous as it must at first have appeared, the boldness of this address (which gave a just presage of his future political course) met with a generous reward from those who could not approve of his public connexions; and he had, on the result of the election, the satisfaction of being returned by a majority of sixty-four over his antagonist, the late Honourable Henry Hobart. In this contest, his success was remarkable, for in almost every other election, the coalition party were totally defeated. In the county of Norfolk, Mr. Windham warmly exerted himself in the cause of his friend Mr. Coke; but that gentleman, notwithstanding the great influence he derived from his large property, and many estimable qualities, was driven from the field by the same cry which, in other places, proved fatal to Lord John Cavendish, General Conway, Mr. Byng, and many other friends of Mr. Fox, who, by a humorous allusion to the book of that title, gained the appellation of "Fox's Martyrs."

The ministers, however, were completely triumphant; their majorities in both houses were large and decisive; and the opposition, strong as they continued to be in talents, were so reduced in numbers, as to be no longer formidable in any other way than by occasionally putting the ministers to the necessity of defending themselves by argument.

Mr. Windham made his first speech in Parliament on the 9th of February 1785, early in the second session after his election. The question which occasioned this trial of his powers, was the celebrated one of the Westminster scrutiny. He rose immediately after Mr. Pitt had spoken on the other side, and he was

followed by Mr. Fox, who congratulated the house "on the accession of the abilities which they had witnessed."

In the course of the same session, Mr. Windham spoke in opposition to Mr. Pitt's Shop tax, which he pronounced to be partial, oppressive, and unjust, on the same grounds upon which he afterwards uniformly reprobated all bills that had for their object a taxation, not on the community at large, but on certain classes of men invidiously selected from it.

We may now advert to the share which Mr. Windham took in the impeachment of Mr. Warren Hastings, for his conduct while administering the government of India. This measure, though considered in its time to be of the very first importance, is now only remembered by the unparalleled combination of talents called forth in the prosecution of it. Of the impeachment itself, it is perhaps needless to say more than merely to remark, that, though it was countenanced by Mr. Pitt, directed by Mr. Burke, and supported by almost unrivalled efforts of eloquence on the part of that extraordinary man, as well as of Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Fox, it lingered on from session to session, till even its power to excite attention seemed exhausted; and it was at length dismissed almost to oblivion, by the very few peers who could be induced to give a vote upon it. The particular charge, however, which was entrusted to Mr. Windham's management, must be concisely noticed. It alleged perfidy and oppression in the Governor-General, in the breach of a treaty which had been made with the Nabob Fyzoola Khan in 1774, after his territories had been invaded by the Company's troops, and the sum of 150,000*l.* had been paid by him upon ratifying the Convention. The case, as it was stated, was certainly one which could not fail to call forth indignation from a man of whom a high sense of honour, and a warm sympathy with the injured, were striking characteristics. In maintaining this charge, Mr. Windham extended his parliamentary reputation; and throughout the proceedings against Mr. Hastings, he fought by the side of Mr. Burke, always ready as well as proud to defend him against the attacks which were personally, and sometimes coarsely, made upon him, as the acknowledged leader of the impeachment.

Late in the autumn of 1788, the King became afflicted with

a return of that melancholy aberration of intellect, which incapacitated him for the affairs of government. On this occasion, Mr. Windham warmly entered into the feelings, and supported the opinions, of his political friends, who contended, both for the hereditary right of the Prince of Wales to assume the Regency, and, during that assumption, for his full enjoyment of the royal prerogatives, unfettered by restrictions. On each of these points however, the minister was triumphant. The right of the two Houses of Parliament "to provide means of supplying the defect of the royal authority," was recognized in a formal resolution; and the Prince of Wales, by an exertion of this right, was to be empowered to administer the royal authority, under the title of Regent, subject to limitations, which restrained him from granting peerages, reversions, and offices for life; but before the bill for this purpose had passed through the forms of the House of Lords, it was rendered unnecessary by the King's recovery, which was announced to parliament on the 10th of March 1789.

In the session of 1790 (4th March) he gave his firm and decided opposition to Mr. Flood's motion for a Reform of Parliament. It will be remembered that upon this question he had made up his mind at an early period; and it will hereafter be seen, that the opinions he then formed remained unshaken to the close of his life. On the present occasion, he differed from Mr. Fox, and his principal political connexions in that house, Mr. Burke excepted. His speech was pronounced by Mr. Pitt to contain "much ingenuity, and, in some respects, as much wisdom and argument as he had ever heard in the walls of that house." Mr. Pitt, however, professed himself to remain, after the most mature deliberation, a firm and zealous friend to parliamentary reform; though, fearing that the cause might suffer disgrace from its being brought forward at an improper moment, he recommended Mr. Flood to withdraw his motion. It appears, from parts of Windham's speech that, at this early stage of it, he foresaw the results of the French Revolution.

In June 1790, the parliament was dissolved, and Mr. Windham was again elected for Norwich, after a very slight opposition.

During the first session of the new parliament, he strongly reprobated the conduct of the ministers, in relation to their arma-

ments against Spain and Russia, which had respectively been occasioned by disputes concerning the possession of Nootka Sound and Oczakow. On a renewal of the latter question, in the succeeding session, he again forcibly expressed his disapprobation of the measures which had been pursued by government. It should also be noticed, for the sake of recording hereafter a proof of the consistency of his sentiments on another subject, that in February 1791 he earnestly supported a bill which was brought into the House of Commons by Mr. Mitford (now Lord Redesdale), for the purpose of relieving from certain penalties and disabilities the protesting Catholic Dissenters of England.

The French Revolution, though it cannot justly be said to have occasioned any change in the general turn of Mr. Windham's political opinions, had ultimately the effect of separating him from many of the persons with whom he had hitherto been acting. Of the commencement and early progress of it, he had been more than a common observer; he had, for a short time, been an actual spectator of the scene. We have already found, that at so early a period as March 1790, he was awake to the danger. Soon after that declaration of his sentiments, the memorable publication of Mr. Burke's "Reflections" produced what may be called a new division of the nation. To one part of Great Britain, it communicated alarm and suggested precaution, while from the other, it served to call forth an avowal of opinions, which before were rather suspected as possible, than believed really to exist; at least, to any considerable extent. The boldness of the answers to Mr. Burke (particularly of that by Paine, contained in his celebrated "Rights of Man") fully confirmed the apprehensions which had been raised, and marked out a definite line of boundary between what were now to be the two great parties of this country and the world.

In the outset of life, Mr. Windham sacrificed his claims upon the representation of Westminster to his dislike of the prevailing doctrine of parliamentary reform; and just before he obtained a seat for another place, he fairly and honourably told those who were about to choose him, that a subserviency to popular notions was not to be expected from him. The very question upon which he, at that time, differed from his constituents, was one in which

he took part with the aristocracy against the temporary clamours of the people. With sentiments of this nature, so broadly avowed, and so uniformly acted upon, he might justly have been reproached with inconsistency, if he had now lent his authority to the approbation of French principles, or his voice to a cry for reform and revolution. On the contrary, he opposed both the principles and the cry, and took his stand by the side of Mr. Burke. Nor was he alone in this decision. The Duke of Portland, the Earls Fitzwilliam and Spencer, with many other persons of rank and character amongst the opposition, felt it to be their duty to support the government against the dangers with which the wide-spreading contagion of French example seemed in their judgment to threaten it.

One of the first public manifestations of this feeling was occasioned by the Proclamation against Seditious Meetings, which was issued by Government in May 1792. This measure, which was decried by Mr. Fox and many of his friends, received, on the contrary, the full sanction, both in and out of Parliament, of the distinguished persons who have just been alluded to. At a public meeting in Norfolk, called for the purpose of voting an Address of Thanks to His Majesty for having sent forth this Proclamation, Mr. Windham took occasion to avow, in the most explicit manner, his opinions on the questions which agitated the country. He rested his support to the Proclamation chiefly on the three following grounds:—the dissemination of writings tending to render the people dissatisfied with their government—the existence of clubs, where delusive remedies were projected for supposed evils—and the correspondence of those clubs with others of the most dangerous character in Paris.

The trials and executions of the unfortunate Louis and his Queen, were events which made a deep impression on Mr. Windham, strengthening both his abhorrence of French principles, and his conviction of the necessity of opposing the progress of them by arms. In the sessions of 1793 and 1794, he gave, on every occasion, his unqualified support to the measures of Government for prosecuting the war, and for repressing seditious practices. And in the month of April in the latter year, he distinguished himself in Norfolk by eloquently recommending the measure of a

voluntary subscription, to be applied in the defence of the country. On this occasion, he was reminded of the conduct he had observed in 1778, with respect to subscriptions in aid of the American war; and he defended himself by adverting to the striking difference that existed between the circumstances of the two contests.

About this time, an offer was made by Mr. Pitt's administration, to form a new cabinet which should include the leaders of the Whig *Alarmists*. This proposal Mr. Windham at first wished to be rejected; thinking that his friends and himself, by continuing out of office, could give their support to the general objects of Government more effectually and independently than they could with seats in the cabinet; and, at the same time, would be left more at liberty to declare their opinions respecting any particular measures connected with the conduct of the war, upon which there were likely to be grounds of variance. Mr. Burke, however, thought differently; his opinion was, that the usefulness of his friends to the country would depend on their being placed in situations which would give them a fair prospect of being able to direct the counsels of Government. His advice prevailed with the majority of those to whom the offer had been made, though not at first with the Duke of Portland. Arrangements were then proposed, under which Mr. Windham was to become one of the Secretaries of State; but at length the Duke of Portland's reluctance to accept office having been overcome, it was thought proper, in consideration of his high rank and influence in the country, to place him in the office which had been intended for Mr. Windham, the latter consenting to accept the inferior one of Secretary at War, with a seat in the cabinet. The distinction of a seat in the cabinet was first annexed to it on this occasion.

In his new capacity, Mr. Windham vindicated the measures of government in parliament with a degree of warmth and openness which by some persons was censured as indiscreet. To that sort of discretion, indeed, which consists in dissembling opinions and feelings, Mr. Windham was an utter stranger. He thought that the common maxim, "honesty is the best policy," was as valuable in courts and cabinets as in the ordinary concerns of life. It is true that, by pursuing this conduct, he sometimes gave opportu-

nities to his adversaries to turn to his disadvantage any hasty or strong expressions which might fall from him in the course of a warm debate. Among those which were imputed to him, the greatest triumph was assumed by the opposition of the day from that of "perish commerce—let the constitution live." But it is curious enough that this remarkable sentiment, which was first charged on him in a pamphlet under the fictitious signature of Jasper Wilson, and was afterwards echoed and re-echoed through the country, had in fact never been uttered by him, but was owned by Mr. Hardinge. Mr. Windham, however, though he denied having spoken the words, justified the sentiment, under the explanation which he gave of it, namely, a preference, as an *alternative*, of government, order, and the British laws, above mere wealth and commercial prosperity.

In July 1795, an expedition, composed of emigrants, proceeded against Quiberon. For this project, which unhappily failed, Mr. Windham always held himself responsible. He thought it a most important object that an attempt should be made to assist the efforts of those Frenchmen who were struggling at home against republicanism; and he earnestly wished that such an experiment should be tried with a far greater force than was actually employed in it. He always remained firmly of opinion that the royalist war in France had been too lightly considered by the British government; and that if the tide had been "taken at the flood," the family of Bourbon might have been restored to the throne.

Upon the dissolution of parliament in 1796, Mr. Windham was, for the fourth time, chosen member for Norwich. An opposition, however, of a much more formidable nature than that in 1794, was attempted in favour of Mr. Bartlett Gurney, a banker, of considerable local influence, who was defeated by a majority of only 83. Mr. Thelwall, the celebrated political lecturer, was at Norwich during this election, and endeavoured to sharpen the contest by his popular harangues in the market-place, against Mr. Windham, and the war-system of the Pitt administration.

In the year 1797, Mr. Windham had to deplore the loss of his illustrious friend Mr. Burke, whose memory he ever regarded with the warmest affection, as well as the profoundest veneration.

He considered the extinction of such eloquence and wisdom, as a heavy misfortune to the country, in the difficulties with which it was then struggling. In a letter, dated 16th November 1797, he says, "I do not reckon it amongst the least calamities of the times, certainly not among those that affect me least, that the world has now lost Mr. Burke. Oh! how much may we rue that his counsels were not followed! Oh! how exactly do we see verified all that he has predicted!"

Of Mr. Windham's political and parliamentary course, during the remainder of the period in which he continued in office with Mr. Pitt, it seems unnecessary to speak much in detail; nor indeed could it be done without entering into a historical relation of the events of the war, which would be quite inconsistent with the limited nature of the present narrative. It may be sufficient to observe generally, that he strenuously resisted every proposal which was made for seeking a peace with the French republic, as well as every measure which, under the specious name of Reform, tended, as he thought, to the subversion of the constitution. The union with Ireland at length indirectly occasioned the dissolution of the cabinet. Mr. Windham's own statement on this subject is so explicit and decisive that it may be proper to quote it here, with the view of explaining the grounds of his retirement from office. "When the proposition," said he, "for the union was first brought forward, I had strong objections to the measure, and I was only reconciled to it upon the idea that all disabilities attaching on the Catholics of Ireland were to be removed, and that the whole population would be united in interests and affections. Believing this to be the case, and finding that impediments were started to this measure much stronger than I was prepared to apprehend, I relinquished the administration, because I thought the measure indispensable to the safety of this empire." His resignation, which took place in February 1801, accompanied five of his colleagues; viz. Mr. Pitt, the Lord Chancellor (Loughborough), Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Dundas. In the new administration, Mr. Addington was placed at the head of the treasury, bearing of course the acknowledged character of prime minister.

Mr. Windham had been in office nearly seven years, and du-

ring that time had effected many regulations by which the army was materially benefited.

In the cabinet it appears that he had differed from Mr. Pitt and the majority of his colleagues, both with respect to the object and to the conduct of the war. He always broadly avowed the opinions which have been before referred to, and which were also maintained by Mr. Burke; namely, that the legitimate object of the war was the restoration of the House of Bourbon, and that this object could only be accomplished by giving liberal encouragement to the exertions of the Royalists in France. That he was wrong with respect to the efficacy of those means, can hardly be inferred from any actual experience of facts; for the attempts which were made to succour the Royalists owed their failure to other causes than a want of energy in the persons intended to be benefited by them.

He thought the war had been conducted with too little attention to the purposes for which it had been originally undertaken;—that it had become a war of shifts and expedients; a contest for petty and remote objects, rather than for near and vital ones. These opinions he repeatedly expressed to some of his colleagues in long and detailed letters, which were in fact state-papers of a most valuable kind.

During the prorogation of Parliament in 1801, the new ministers settled preliminaries of peace with France and her allies. This measure Mr. Windham regarded, not less in the terms than in the principle, as highly dangerous to the interests of the country. On the first discussion of this subject, which was upon an Address of Thanks to the King, he was unable to deliver his sentiments; but on the following day, (Nov. 4th,) when the report of the Address was brought up, he pronounced the celebrated speech which he afterwards published in the form of a Pamphlet, subjoining to it an Appendix, valuable for the information it contains, as well as for the vigour with which it is composed.

The definitive treaty, which was ratified a few months afterwards, he considered to be even more censurable than the preliminaries had been; and in conformity with this opinion, he moved an Address to the King on the 13th of May 1802, deploring the sacrifices which had been submitted to by the treaty, and

expressing apprehensions for the safety of the empire, in the immense accession of territory, influence, and power which had been confirmed to France. He prefaced this Address with an eloquent and powerful speech, but after a debate which occupied two evenings the motion was negatived by 278 votes against 22, including tellers. Lord Grenville moved a similar address in the House of Lords, which was rejected by 122 against 16. So popular was the Peace of Amiens, that only 16 peers and 22 commoners could be found to disapprove of it! Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, though on different grounds, were found amongst its supporters.

Mr. Windham fell a victim to the intrepidity he had shown in opposing this darling measure. After having represented Norwich for eighteen years, he lost his seat to Mr. William Smith, who had been invited thither to oppose him.

He took his seat for the borough of St. Mawes, which the kindness of the Grenville family had secured for him as a retreat, in the event of a repulse at Norwich. His friends at the latter place, though his political connexion with them no longer existed, were unwilling to extinguish all recollection of it. They celebrated his birth-day by annual meetings, which were fully attended; and they gave themselves the additional satisfaction of placing in their public hall, by means of a subscription, a well-executed portrait of him.

When the renewal of war appeared inevitable, he opposed with considerable warmth, the measure which Mr. Fox recommended, of seeking an adjustment of differences through the mediation of Russia; and he urged, on the contrary, the immediate adoption of the most vigorous means for the defence of the country. Of this description, however, he did not consider the measure proposed by the ministers for raising, by a scheme of ballot and substitution, what was called an Army of Reserve; nor was he disposed to approve of the indiscriminate employment of a large and expensive establishment of volunteers. His speeches on these subjects not only contain some of the most amusing specimens of his eloquence, but may be regarded, perhaps, as valuable essays on military topics, from which those who remain unconvinced by his arguments, may glean much

useful information, conveyed to them in a pleasing and popular form.

To the volunteers he was falsely represented as an enemy. He admired and uniformly extolled the spirit which they manifested in the moment of danger; as well as their total disregard of personal inconvenience and privations. But while he admitted their usefulness if employed as light independent bodies, trained as marksmen, and not clogged with the discipline of regulars, he lamented to see them formed into battalions, and attempted to be forced by a kind of hot-bed into troops of the line. To hang on the rear of an invading enemy, to cut off his supplies, to annoy him from concealed points by keeping up an irregular fire, were services which he conceived volunteers might easily learn and skilfully execute; but the steady and exact discipline which is required from troops destined to face an enemy in the field of battle, he thought their previous habits, unsuitable avocations, and scanty means of instruction, would totally forbid them from attaining.

A motion made by Mr. Pitt, on the 15th of March 1804, for an enquiry into the state of the navy, had the effect of uniting in its support his own friends with those of the Grenvilles, Mr. Windham, and Mr. Fox;—and though it was negatived by a majority of 71, an opinion began rather generally to prevail that Mr. Addington's administration was not long-lived. In its stead, the country seemed to expect that a ministry would be formed on a broader basis, uniting all the parties then in opposition, and having in its cabinet the two great rival leaders who had for twenty years divided the suffrages of the nation.

On the 11th of April, upon the third reading of the Irish Militia Bill, another trial of strength took place, in which the numbers of the allied oppositionists approached very near to those of the ministers; being 107 against 128.

The ministers, however, fell only by repeated attacks. On the 23d of April, Mr. Fox moved for a committee to consider of measures for the defence of the country. This motion received the support of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Windham, and of their respective friends, amounting in all to 204 against 256. A division, two days afterwards, on the Irish Militia Bill, proved still less favourable to the ministers, who could count only 240 votes against 203.

By these latter divisions, the fate of Mr. Addington's administration was decided. Mr. Pitt, in submitting a list of names to the royal consideration, not only included that of Mr. Fox, but is said to have earnestly and warmly recommended his admission into the new cabinet. But the attempt proved unsuccessful, and Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Windham declined, in consequence, to take their seats in a cabinet which was not to be formed on the extensive plan of including the heads of all the parties who had been acting together in opposition. Mr. Pitt, however, accepted the premiership, taking with him Lord Melville, and others of his immediate political friends, to whom were joined Lord Hawkesbury, Lord Castlereagh, the Duke of Portland, Lord Eldon, and some other members of the preceding cabinet.

Mr. Windham was now once more the ally of Mr. Fox, and the adversary of Mr. Pitt;—a situation which exposed him to a charge of inconsistency. In June 1804, soon after the change of administration, Mr. Pitt brought forward his Additional Force Bill, more generally known afterwards by the name of the "Parish Bill," the recruiting under its provisions being intended to be effected by parish officers. Mr. Windham opposed it in two able speeches. The bill, however, passed both houses.

In the course of the ensuing session, (21st of February 1805,) he called the attention of the house, in a long and luminous speech, to the state of the defence of the country; but on this question the minister was again triumphant. He also took occasion, on the 14th of May following, to pronounce his opinion in favour of the claims of the Catholics of Ireland. This was a topic which he had much at heart.

The remainder of the session of 1805 was chiefly occupied by the proceedings against Lord Melville, in which Mr. Windham took but little part. He concurred, indeed, in the several votes for inquiry, but declined taking a personal share in it, considering himself disqualified for such a duty by "the official connexion which he had had with Lord Melville, the social intercourse thence arising, and the impression made on his mind by the many amiable and estimable qualities which the Noble Lord was known to possess.

The expectation of a vacant seat for the University of Oxford, occasioned, in the summer of 1805, an active canvass for Mr. Windham on the part of his friends, who were naturally desirous that one of the most honourable distinctions which the University could bestow, should be conferred on so celebrated a member of it. The prospect of such a seat was, on every account, highly desirable to Mr. Windham, but the vacancy did not then take place; and when it afterwards occurred, he had engaged himself in a contest for Norfolk.

In the succeeding month, Mr. Windham shared deeply in the feelings of the country on the loss of Lord Nelson, whom he valued as a personal friend, and highly admired as the greatest ornament of his profession.

Lord Nelson's death was speedily followed by Mr. Pitt's;—an event which is believed to have been hastened by the calamitous issue of the grand continental confederacy against France. At the opening of the session, on the 21st of January 1806, Mr. Pitt was living, but in a state that afforded no hope of recovery.

On Mr. Pitt's death, a change of administration was naturally looked for.

The change which was expected took place in the beginning of the ensuing month, Lord Grenville being commanded by the King to form a new administration. He was himself placed at the head of the treasury, as prime minister. Earl Spencer, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Windham, received respectively the seals of the home, the foreign, and the war and colonial departments.

The earliest and chief object of Mr. Windham's attention, on his attaining office, was to arrange and bring forward measures for increasing the military means of the country. His measures having been finally settled in the cabinet, he stated the purport of them to the House of Commons on the 3d of April 1806, in a speech which Mr. Fox pronounced to be one of the most eloquent ever delivered in parliament, and which, though it occupied very near four hours in the delivery, seemed not to be thought too long by any of his auditors.

To better the condition of the soldier was his great and leading principle for increasing the regular force of the country. To hold out periods for the termination of the soldier's services, and

to recompense those services by additional rewards, were the means by which he sought to accomplish this improvement:— and the immediate effect which he expected to produce, was, the rendering of the army more inviting as a profession, from its being more advantageous in a prudential view, and consequently more respectable, on account of the better description of persons who might thus be induced to engage in it. The soldier, in short, was to serve an apprenticeship to arms, as to a trade, and then either to follow it up, or to relinquish it, at his option; but was to be entitled to additional benefits, if he should be disposed to continue his services. These were the main objects of his measures, which included, however, many subordinate regulations.

His measures, under the form of various bills, passed through both Houses of Parliament, with considerable majorities. A liberal and *immediate* addition to the pensions of non-commissioned officers and privates, in certain cases, was carefully provided for.

In the summer of 1806, Mr. Fox, whose health had been declining from the time of his accepting office, found a grave near that of his illustrious rival. His loss was deeply lamented by Mr. Windham, whose personal regard for him had perhaps never wholly ceased, but had certainly been fully restored upon their recent political reconciliation. This event, besides the regret which it produced, happened to be the occasion of some embarrassment to him. In consequence of an arrangement which was proposed in the cabinet respecting the appointment to certain offices (but not affecting his own, which was to remain as before), the acceptance of a peerage was very strongly pressed upon him by his colleagues, and very resolutely refused by him. Convenient as the measure might have been to him, with a view to avoid the expense of future elections, (particularly of a contest in Norfolk, where a canvass had actually been begun for him,) he would not for an instant suffer considerations of this kind to influence his decision. He felt that his usefulness to the country depended not a little on his station in the House of Commons; and he would have cheerfully relinquished his office, rather than wear the honours which were to be thrust upon him. In consequence of his refusal, another arrangement was fixed upon: Lord Howick succeeded Mr. Fox as foreign secretary, and Mr. Thomas Grenville took his seat at the admiralty.

In October 1806, the parliament was dissolved.

Mr. Windham having been previously returned not only for Norfolk but for the borough of New Rowney, now took his seat for the latter place.

Soon after the meeting of the new parliament, Mr. Windham found a welcome opportunity of giving full expression to those chivalrous feelings with which the successful exertions of British valour never failed to inspire him. In his official capacity, he had to call the attention of the House of Commons to the victory which had been gallantly achieved on the Plains of Maida, by a small body of troops under the command of Sir John Stuart. As the task was grateful to him, he executed it in a manner which made the most lively impression on his auditors.

It was during Mr. Windham's absence in Norfolk, that Lord Howick called the attention of the House of Commons to a clause which was intended by the ministers to be introduced into the Mutiny Bill, for enabling Roman Catholics to hold a certain military rank, and permitting to all persons in the army professing that religion the uncontrolled exercise of it. It was afterwards thought expedient that the intended provisions should be made the subject of a separate bill, and be extended to the navy. The misunderstanding which this measure occasioned between the King and his ministers, and the consequent dismissal of the latter from their posts, are subjects that need not be minutely treated of. It will be sufficient to relate, that on the 25th of March 1807, when called upon with the other ministers to deliver up his appointments, Mr. Windham received a flattering assurance of the sense which the King entertained of the motives that had guided him in executing the duties of his office.

In the very short period of a year and six weeks, Mr. Windham had done much for the benefit of the army. He had abolished service for life, and substituted service for periods ;—he had increased the pay of the subaltern, as well as the ultimate rewards of the private soldier ;—and (though circumstances had delayed the execution of it) he had passed a measure for arming and training a great part of the population of the country.

The Duke of Portland was placed at the head of the new administration. Lord Castlereagh, whom Mr. Windham had suc-

ceeded in the war and colonial department, again received the seals of that office; and Lord Hawkesbury, Mr. Canning, and Mr. Perceval occupied the other prominent situations in the new cabinet. In two successive divisions, the ministers succeeded in negating the motions which had been brought forward for censuring the means of their attaining office. Their success, however, was not so decided, as to render the continuance of the parliament advisable. It was, therefore, dissolved on the 28th April 1807, in its first session, and within five months after it had assembled.

In the first debate of the new parliament he made a vigorous stand against the clamour of "no popery," which he complained had been raised against him and his late colleagues. Soon afterwards he gave his decided opposition to Lord Castlereagh's bill for allowing a proportion of the militia to transfer their services into the line, by enlisting at their option either for periods or for life. This he considered as a fatal interruption of his measures which parliament had sanctioned in the preceding year. At the conclusion of the session he brought forward, in the shape of propositions, a summary view of the advantages which had already been derived from the system of recruiting for periods.

The expedition which was sent against Copenhagen, in the summer of 1807, received his decided disapprobation.

Early in the summer of 1808, the eyes of all Europe were directed towards Spain, where a gallant spirit broke forth, such as few persons perhaps besides Mr. Windham had harboured a hope of. His anticipation of it is found in a speech occasioned by the capture of Monte-Video, and delivered on the 16th of April 1807, more than a twelvemonth before the commencement of the resistance which he contemplated. From the first notice of this resistance to the latest period of his life, he was a zealous *Spaniard*.

He not only took the most lively interest in the proceedings of the patriots, but even promised himself an opportunity of becoming a personal witness of them, by undertaking a voyage to the scene of action.

He returned to Parliament after the commencement of the session of 1809. Mr. Wardle had previously brought forward his charges in the House of Commons, against the Duke of York, as

Commander in Chief, and the evidence in support of them had been proceeded upon. This investigation, which occupied much of the time and attention of the House, having at length been brought to a close, Mr. Windham, on the 14th of March, pronounced his judgment on the question, in a speech which certainly deserves the praise of great moderation, as well as of extraordinary acuteness.' He lamented that the charges had been brought forward, and strongly reprobated the manner in which they had been attempted to be supported; but though he acquitted the Duke of York of any participation or connivance in the disgraceful transactions which had been laid open, and was therefore ready to negative the address which Mr. Wardle had proposed, yet he thought that the suspicions which were felt, and would continue to be felt, by the country, were such as to render it desirable that His Royal Highness should withdraw from office.

This speech, as it did not exactly fall in with the opinions of either party, has not hitherto perhaps received all the commendation it deserves. The distinctions laid down in it, on the degree of credibility due to certain descriptions of evidence, will be acknowledged, perhaps, on examination, to be not less profound than ingenious. It might be difficult to find in any professional treatise on the doctrine of evidence, such an union of logical accuracy with minute knowledge of mankind as was on this occasion applied to the subject by Mr. Windham.

In the course of this session, the bill proposed by Mr. Curwen, for preventing the sale of seats in parliament, afforded him an opportunity of discussing at considerable length the general question of Reform, against which his protest had been frequently and forcibly given. This speech, for close observation of human nature, and for vigour of imagination, is not to be excelled by any in the present collection.

Lord Erskine's Bill for preventing Cruelty to Animals he opposed with equal wit and argument.

The failure of the Walcheren Expedition was followed by proceedings in the cabinet which led to the resignation of Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning. A formal offer was now made by Mr. Perceval, on the part of the ministers, to Lords Grenville and Grey, to receive them, with their friends, as members of the

administration. The proposal, however, was rejected, and the answer, as well as the note in which the offer was conveyed, were afterwards made public.

The administration did, however, go on, as Mr. Windham expected and hoped. Mr. Perceval became First Lord of the Treasury upon the death of the Duke of Portland; the Marquis Wellesley succeeded Mr. Canning in the foreign department; and the Earl of Liverpool accepted the seals of the war and colonial office, which had been resigned by Lord Castlereagh.

He returned to town soon after Christmas, and at the commencement of the session of 1810 was at his post. He took an early occasion to express in very strong terms his disapprobation of the object and conduct of the expedition to the Scheldt.

The part which he took on a subsequent question exposed him to much temporary unpopularity. In the prosecution of the enquiry which the House of Commons instituted on the subject of the Scheldt Expedition, Mr. Yorke thought it necessary to move daily the standing order for excluding strangers. This measure was reprobated by Mr. Sheridan, who proposed that the standing order should be referred to a committee of privileges. Mr. Windham, who had always professed to dislike the custom of reporting debates in the newspapers, not only warmly opposed Mr. Sheridan's motion, but used some expressions by which the reporters in the gallery considered themselves to be personally calumniated. Their resentment, as might be expected, broke forth in daily attacks on him in the public prints; and they soon came to a formal agreement that his speeches should no longer be reported. For these marks of vengeance, Mr. Windham had fully prepared himself, and he imputed no blame to those who inflicted them. To the honour of the conductors of the daily press, it should be remembered that, a few months afterwards, they buried their resentments in the grave of their illustrious adversary, and joined with the public in lamenting the loss of his talents and virtues.

By the temporary exclusion of Mr. Windham's speeches from the newspapers, some valuable ones have been wholly lost, while of others there have been preserved only a few slight and unsatisfactory fragments. Only one, and that a very short one remains entire, namely, his eulogium on the character and conduct of the

Roman Catholics of England. From that body (whose claims it will be remembered, received his warm support in 1790) he now presented two petitions, praying, in loyal and respectful language, for the removal of the pains and disabilities to which they were liable by law, on account of their religious principles.

Another speech, which he made in support of Lord Porchester's motion, censuring the expedition against the Scheldt, is represented, by those who heard it, to have been one of the most eloquent ever delivered in Parliament. It arrested and fully recompensed the attention of the house for nearly two hours. He was urged by some of his friends to prepare it for publication in the form of a pamphlet; but his answer was, that as the subject was temporary, so was the speech, and he felt no anxiety to preserve it.

In the proceedings of the House of Commons against Sir Francis Burdett, for a breach of their privileges, Mr. Windham stood forward in maintaining what he conceived to be the rights of Parliament, and concurred in the vote, which was finally agreed upon, for committing Sir Francis a prisoner to the Tower. His speech, on this occasion, is said to have been a highly animated one, but no part of it has been preserved.

The practice of mutilating the printed reports of parliamentary proceedings continued but for little more than two months; after which Mr. Windham's speeches were again suffered to appear, as well as Mr. Tierney's, which had shared in the proscription made by the reporters. On the 1st of May 1810, we find Mr. Windham opposing the second reading of a bill which had been brought in by Sir Samuel Romilly, as part of his plan for reducing the number of capital punishments. This Mr. Windham considered as a measure of dangerous innovation, and in resisting it, he took occasion to avow his belief that the mischievous effects of the French Revolution had not yet ceased. That Revolution, he said, had still an existence,—“it was above us, and beneath us;—it was without us, and within us;—it was everywhere round about us.” The bill was lost by a majority of two.

He spoke for the last time in the House of Commons, on the 11th of May 1810. The question before the house was, the course which it would be expedient to take in relation to the actions

which had been brought against the Speaker and the Serjeant at Arms by Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Windham, as it will be readily conceived, asserted the dignity of Parliament, and the sacredness of its privileges.

A painful narrative remains to be related. The calamitous event which caused Mr. Windham's last illness took place a few months previous to the period down to which the circumstances of his political life have just been carried. It was about midnight, on the 8th of July 1809, that in walking home from an evening party, he observed a house in Conduit-Street to be on fire. He hastened to the spot, to render his assistance, and found that the house in flames was so near to that of his friend, the Honourable Frederick North, as to threaten its destruction. Knowing that Mr. North, (who was then on a voyage in the Mediterranean) possessed a most valuable library, Mr. Windham determined, with the assistance of some persons belonging to a volunteer corps, whom he selected from the crowd, to make an effort for the preservation of it. After four hours' labour, four-fifths of the books were saved. He did not quit the house till the flames, which finally consumed it, had spread so extensively as to render his further exertions highly dangerous. During the time that he was employed in this arduous undertaking, it happened, most unfortunately, that, by a fall, he received a blow on the hip, but not of so painful a nature as to occasion any relaxation of his efforts. He complained, not of the hurt he had received, but of a cold which was the consequence of his exposure to the weather, the night having been very rainy. His cold continued to be very troublesome to him for some time, but from the blow on his hip, he, for many months, appeared to suffer no inconvenience whatever, though it occasioned a tumour which, in the following spring, had increased to considerable size.

In May 1810, Mr. Windham found it necessary to give his serious attention to the tumour which had been thus collected. Mr. Cline (whom he had consulted upon it two months before) gave it as his opinion that, in order to prevent dangerous consequences, an immediate operation was necessary ;—and his advice was confirmed by that of four out of six eminent surgeons whom Mr. Windham separately consulted. It is not at all surprising, there-

fore, that Mr. Windham, whose courage was on all occasions remarkable, should have determined on submitting at once to the dangers of the knife, rather than linger on in doubt and apprehension.

He arrived in London on Friday the 11th of May. On the following Sunday, he attended at the Charter-house, and received the sacrament, which was administered to him privately by the Reverend Dr. Fisher, the master of that institution, with whom he had been intimately acquainted from his youth. The remaining days, before the operation was to take place, he employed in arranging papers, in making a codicil to his will, and in writing many letters, some of which were addressed to his nearest relatives, to be opened in case the event proved fatal to him.

On Thursday, the 17th of May 1810, the operation was performed by Mr. Lynn, in the presence of Dr. Blane, Mr. Home, and Mr. Pilliner, Mr. Windham's apothecary. The tumour was skilfully extracted, but having been very deeply seated, and attached to the ligaments of the hip joint, the operation was necessarily painful. Mr. Windham, however, bore the pain with the greatest resolution; and, during a pause occasioned by a consultation upon the necessity of making a further incision, he even joked with his perilous situation. The tumour proved to be schirrous, of the shape of a turkey's egg, but even larger. For a few days, appearances were not unfavourable, though the wound did not heal with what is called the *first intention*, and though Mr. Windham suffered greatly from restlessness and an irritable state of the nerves. But the hopes even of his most sanguine friends, soon began to give way. A symptomatic fever came on, and upon the ninth day he was pronounced to be in great danger. On the following day the symptoms were judged to be less unfavourable, but others of an alarming kind soon succeeded, and the medical attendants (to whom were now added Dr. Baillie and Sir Henry Hallford) no longer entertained hopes of his recovery. From this time, the fever abated, the pulse became firmer and better, and the patient even began to take and enjoy nourishment; yet, in spite of these otherwise flattering circumstances, the state of the wound, which had never suppurated, and the total inability of nature to make any effort towards re-

lieving it, were symptoms that excited no feelings but those of despair.

While he lay in this hopeless condition, nothing could exceed the concern which was expressed by almost all classes of the inhabitants of London; nor was this sentiment narrowed by party feelings, for every man who spoke of him seemed to be his friend. From the commencement of his illness, the number of anxious enquirers who had thronged the door to obtain a sight of the daily reports of the physicians, would almost be thought incredible. Among those who shared in these feelings, was the King, who took every opportunity of making enquiries of the physicians concerning Mr. Windham's illness, pronouncing him (as he had done on a former occasion) to be a "real patriot and a truly honest man."

On Sunday, the 3d of June, his dissolution appeared to be fast approaching. He expired, without pain or emotion, the next morning (Monday, June the 4th). He had just completed the sixtieth year of his age.

In his person he was tall and well proportioned. Having in his youth been eminently skilful in manly exercises, he had thence acquired in his deportment a happy union of strength and ease, of agility and gracefulness, which never forsook him. The form of his features was singularly interesting; and the penetrating vivacity of his eye gave a faithful indication of the corresponding qualities of his mind.

His address and conversation were fascinating to all classes of persons;—as well to the grave as to the gay—to the uninformed as to the learned—to the softer as to the sterner sex. His manners delighted all circles, from the royal drawing-room to the village-green; though in all circles they were still the same. As the polish of his address was not artificial, it was alike pleasing to all. No man had ever less pride, in its offensive sense.

Of his acquirements it is needless to speak much at length. That he was "a scholar, and a ripe and good one," there are abundant testimonies to prove; nor did his classical attainments, great as they were universally allowed to be, exceed his skill in the various branches of mathematical science. That skill the public, it is hoped, will be enabled to appreciate at some future time,

by the publication of the manuscript treatises which are in the hands of his executors. His reading latterly was miscellaneous and desultory; but what he hastily acquired, he actually retained and aptly applied in illustration of his opinions and arguments.

It now remains to speak of his domestic virtues, in doing which it will be difficult to use any other language than that of unqualified, eulogium. His tenderness as a husband and relative, his kindness as a friend and patron, his condescending attention to inferiors, his warm sympathy with the unfortunate, are so many themes of praise, which it would be more agreeable than necessary to dwell upon. The sense which he entertained of the importance of religion, and which he strongly marked by one of the concluding acts of his life, will serve to complete the character of a man who had scarcely an enemy, except on political grounds, and had more personal friends warmly attached to him, than almost any man of the age.

In the House of Lords, on the 6th of June 1810, in a debate on the Question for referring to a Committee of the whole house the Petitions of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, Earl Grey said, Within the last four years they had lost two great statesmen, Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, to whom, above all others, he could safely affirm, the different political descriptions in the country looked up for that wisdom in council and energy in execution, so necessary in any pressing emergency of public affairs. To these was now added the third loss, the subject of their present lamentations. It was unnecessary to say that he alluded to the late Mr. Windham. It was his misfortune at different times to differ from that distinguished and regretted character, yet in the heat of political disagreement, he never ceased to admire his many and splendid virtues.—He was a man of a great, original, and commanding genius—with a mind cultivated with the richest stores of intellectual wealth, and a fancy winged to the highest flights of a most captivating imagery; of sound and spotless integrity (hear! hear!), with a warm spirit, but a generous heart (hear! hear!), and of a courage and determination so characteristic, as to hold him forward as the strong example of what the old English heart could effect or endure. He was such a man, that his adversary, if there was any man worthy to be his adversary, must respect him. He

had, indeed, his faults, but they served like the skilful disposition of shade in works of art, to make the impression of his virtues more striking, and gave additional grandeur to the great outline of his character.

Lord Milton rose, and in a tone which the strength of his feelings frequently rendered inaudible, spoke to the following effect:—In moving, Sir, for a new writ for Higham Ferrers, I feel it to be my duty to speak of that illustrious man whose death has occasioned the present motion. It would have been better if the performance of that duty had devolved upon some more competent person; at the same time, I must say, that, connected, as I had the honour to be, with that illustrious man, my heart would have upbraided me if I had seen any person whatever more eager to do that justice than myself. I decline to take that course for which there are examples, with regard to other distinguished individuals, in consequence of the last strict injunctions of my deceased friend; and in the observations which I mean to submit to you, I do not wish to allude to any particular part of his public conduct, lest such allusion should tend to create the slightest difference of opinion among those who are willing to do honour to his memory. When I speak of his great talents and unsullied integrity, I feel confident that no difference can arise, either among those who agreed or those who disagreed with him. All persons admit the splendour of his genius, the extent of his ability, the value and the variety of his mental acquirements; all who have had any opportunity of witnessing the display of his vigorous, his instructive, his rich and polished eloquence, will, I am persuaded, concur with me in the opinion, that his death has caused a great, and perhaps an irreparable vacancy in this house. But, in addition to all the qualities of genius, information and integrity, which confessedly belonged to my lamented friend, there was one character which attached to him in a most eminent degree—(Here the Noble Lord was quite oppressed by his emotion, and there was a loud and general cry of hear, hear, hear!)—I believe, resumed the Noble Lord, that it will ever remain in the memory of this house, that among the most interesting peculiarities which distinguished my friend, was an undaunted intrepidity under all circumstances, such indeed as rarely falls to the lot of man, and a

manly promptitude to speak his mind upon all occasions. He was the man of whom more than another it might well be said—

*Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solidâ.*

He was the man who was never to be moved from his purpose, or relaxed in his exertion by any considerations, either of fear or of favour—no, never was he to be warped from the honest dictates of his own mind. This quality, always so valuable, and which, on all occasions, conferred such peculiar importance upon his sentiments, renders his loss at present an aggravated national calamity. For never, perhaps, was it more necessary that public men should not shrink from their duties, but act firmly and consistently with the dictates of an honest and unbiassed opinion. While I dilate upon the merits of my deceased friend, it is my wish to abstain from any thing like exaggeration. It was very rarely his lot to obtain what is usually termed popularity. But, if it be true, as it has often been remarked, that rarely high character and popularity are to be found joined together, his fate furnished an impressive illustration of that remark. There may be persons ready to follow the inclination of what is called popularity respecting my friend. But although he may not have the favour of such persons, sure I am, that in no part of his conduct did he ever want the sanction of an approving conscience—that in no instance whatever was he without that highest of human gratifications. No, his honourable mind was ever conscious that if it did not enjoy, at least it deserved the good opinion of the country.—That he actually had the good opinion of all those who are capable of truly appreciating character, I have not the slightest doubt. Among all those who attach any value to real public virtue and talent, I am firmly persuaded that no man ever stood higher. If he had faults and indiscretions, which of us are without them? but his faults and indiscretions were not of any ordinary cast, for they sprung from no ordinary source. They were not the effect of any deficiency of understanding or lowness of view—no, but of that high-minded generosity which was his peculiar characteristic. His disinterestedness was wholly unquestionable. Never did he appear to regard in the slightest degree in

what manner his public conduct might affect himself—how it might impair his character or his circumstances. Influenced alone by what he conceived to be right, he steadily pursued it without any dread of consequences. Whether his ideas of right or wrong were generally correct, or whether results generally justified those ideas, certain I am that I anticipate the concurrence of those who closely observed him, that the feelings and the motives I have described, were the uniform guides of his conduct.—At an early period of his life, he had attached himself to another great man (Mr. Burke), whose loss the country has already deplored. He imbibed from that great character those opinions which he invariably pursued; and though, at one time, it might be said, that he became exceedingly alarmed at what some might regard as improvements, but what others might consider as innovations, it proceeded from a reverential awe for the true principles of the constitution.—The Noble Lord then expressed that it had been his wish to avoid any thing which could tend to excite controversy, and to confine himself to those points upon which controversy was impossible. It was his wish to say something on those parts of his character which others might not have had opportunities of observing, but he felt himself unequal to the task. Perhaps it was unnecessary that he should do so. The house knew his public character; and certain he was, that among his friends and foes there was but one opinion—that in his death they had sustained a loss which perhaps the youngest among them might not live to see repaired. Having thus unburdened his own mind on the occasion, he believed he had no more to say. Had he not so expressed himself, his conduct might have been justly considered more extraordinary. He lamented what he had said had been so inelegantly spoken, but he was not able sufficiently to master his feelings to express himself as he could wish. He concluded by moving, “That the Speaker do issue his writ for a burgess to serve in parliament for the borough of Higham Ferrers, in the room of the Right Honourable William Windham, deceased.”

Mr. Canning, though he had been long in the habit of opposing the public conduct of the illustrious character now no more, rose to bear his testimony to those talents and virtues which had distinguished Mr. Windham’s splendid career. He felt equally with

the Noble Lord, the impossibility of doing justice to talents so exalted, to virtues so rare. Among all the storms and all the contests which had raged in his time, whatever might have been the frenzy of the moment, he above all had avoided the appearance and the reality of soliciting popular approbation. But if his conduct had not made him the object of transient popularity, it had secured him what was of greater value, lasting and unperishable admiration. At no time could so great a character pay the last debt of nature, without leaving a chasm much to be deplored, and difficult to fill up; but never was there a period at which his loss could be more sensibly felt than at present. Throughout his life, from a sincere sense of public duty, he had exposed himself to every threatening evil, in what he conceived to be the cause of his country.—He had left them a proof that conduct so upright, if not calculated to gain the applause of a party, was certain of conciliating universal esteem. It had often been his (Mr. Canning's) fate, during the time he had been his contemporary, to oppose his public conduct. This he had frequently done, thinking he (Mr. Windham) carried the best principles to an excess, but never once had he suspected his motives to be dishonourable.—There was a selfishness of which it was difficult for a public man to divest himself—the selfish pleasure of pleasing those with whom they were in the habit of acting; but superior still, even of this most amiable of all selfish feelings had Mr. Windham been acquitted, both by his political friends and opponents.

SELECT SPEECHES

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM WINDHAM.



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SPEECHES
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM WINDHAM.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

MARCH 4th, 1790.

MR. FLOOD moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Representation of the People in Parliament. The motion being seconded by Mr. Grigby,

MR. WINDHAM addressed the Chair in the following speech :

Sir,

It will be unnecessary for me to reply to the arguments of the Right Honourable Gentleman very much in detail, since, as the question has been so often debated in this house, they are arguments which every Gentleman who has heard them will be able to refute. But I cannot help observing, that there is a preliminary question which the Right Honourable Gentleman seems wholly to have forgotten, and which ought to have been answered before his motion should even have been received by the house. I mean, that he has forgotten to show that any necessity exists for adopting his proposition; he has not proved enough to encourage us to go on with him a single step. He ought first to have made out his grievance, and then to have proposed his remedy. When the house is put in possession of both, it will be the time to judge how far the first is ascertained, and the second proportionate; and to decide whether the remedy ought to be adopted or not. But the Right Honourable Gentleman has only asserted, that the representation is inadequate, without any attempt whatever to *prove* that fact. As a substitute for argument, he has contented himself with a triumphant appeal to the people; and this I have always observed to be the practice of those who have brought this question before the house. On my part, I am ready to resort to the same appeal, and to ask whether the House of Commons, constituted as it is, be not answerable to all the purposes that can be required of it; and whether the people do not live under it happy

and free, and do not even enjoy all the luxuries of life which they can possibly desire. It is whimsical to say that a constitution, which has lasted so long, and which experience has taught us to value and revere, ought now to be departed from, in order that we may adopt theoretical and new-fangled schemes, such as are now proposed to us. Let us, in opposition to such assertions and doctrines, look to the blessings we are enjoying;—let us judge of the tree by its fruits, and apply to the British Constitution a homely adage, which is not the less apposite for being coarse;—that “the proof of the pudding is in the eating.” The experience of all ages has demonstrated, that this house is adequate to all that is necessary, and that with no better a system of representation, the country has been prosperous and flourishing, the people have been comfortable and safe. Every proposition of reformation or innovation is good or bad according to the circumstances of the case; and this is a case in which I cannot help thinking that we have every thing to lose and nothing to gain. The project comes before the house under the appearance of liberty, as all innovations do, which are likely to destroy that very liberty they profess to preserve. The liberty of this country requires no speculative security, nor can it be better secured than by the means by which it has so long continued.

Sir, the Right Honourable Gentleman has quoted the case of the Middlesex Election, and has laid great stress on the fact of the minority having in that case been allowed to triumph over the majority. The fact, indeed, was so, and were it so in other cases, were such even the general rule of election, and the affairs of the house were to go on as well as they have done, I should not be disposed to quarrel with such a rule, merely because I might be unable exactly to see how such a result could follow from it. I should content myself with the result itself; and to those who, like the Right Honourable Gentleman, might be disposed to cavil with it, I would say, in the words of Hamlet,

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

As to the American War, the Right Honourable Gentleman, in his reference to that subject, has come somewhat near to the point to which I wish to bring him;—I mean, to matter of fact. But I deny that the continuance of that war was owing to the inadequacy of the representation. On the contrary, it was the wish of the people that that war should be begun, nor was any strong indication of an opposite feeling manifested, till towards the conclusion of it. It is true, indeed, that a Right Honourable Friend of mine (Mr. Fox) opposed the war, and that the Electors of Westminster continued him, and very properly continued him,

as their representative. But it is also true, that another Right Honourable Friend of mine (Mr. Burke) acted the same wise and honourable part, and what was the consequence? Why, that he lost his seat for Bristol. He was expressly turned out, at a popular election, for opposing the continuance of the war, and had to resort for a seat to one of those boroughs which are now proposed to be disfranchised. Towards the close of the war, a loud clamour was raised for a Reform of Parliament, as a remedy for the evils, and losses, and expenses, to which the people had been exposed; though I am afraid that those very people originally engaged in the war with no better motive than that of saving their own pockets by taxing those of the Americans.

Sir, it was at the period of which I am now speaking, that a deluge of wild opinions was let loose upon us. The emancipation of America served to swell the flood. But I have been flattering myself that it had long since subsided. I hoped that the cry had been dead, but it turns out only to have slept. And truly sorry am I to observe, that swarms of these strange impracticable notions have lately been wafted over to us from the Continent, to prey like locusts on the fairest flowers of our soil;—to destroy the boasted beauty and verdure of our Constitution. It is in conformity with these notions that we are called upon to new-model our establishments, which have for ages withstood innovation. Yet the people at large, it is obvious, have no such wish. If they have, why do they not declare it? What is the political malady, what the grievance that is now complained of? What evil has overtaken us, in consequence of this inadequate representation of the people? Experience has proved that the British Constitution contains somewhere and somehow within itself, a principle of self-recovery and self-preservation, which brings it back, amidst all the deviations to which it is exposed, to its natural and salutary state. *Quod petis hic est.* There is no occasion for an infusion of new blood, which, instead of being salutary, might prove fatal.

But, Sir, were I even disposed to approve of the Right Honourable Gentleman's notions of reform, I should still feel it my duty to object in the strongest manner to the time in which he has thought proper to bring them forward. What, would he recommend you to repair your house in the hurricane season? The Right Honourable Gentleman, indeed, professes only to wish to open the door for a change, being perfectly indifferent himself as to what that change might be. Now a change may be good in the abstract; but merely for the sake of a change, I can never consent to pull down the fabric, and take the chance of building it up again. This, to use the language of play, (though I am myself no gamester,) would not be *playing upon velvet*: a little

only might be gained, and every thing might be lost. As to a love of change generally, this passion is natural to all ages and countries; but men are not more fond of innovation, than they are apt to differ as to the particular schemes of reform that are to be carried into execution. It is not enough to say, that a majority of the people are friendly to reform in general, unless some particular mode of reformation be also agreed upon. But even were this the case, and were any scheme of Parliamentary Reform generally approved of, I should still think it my duty to oppose the dangerous and progressive spirit of innovation;—I must still enter my protest against the strange mixture of metaphysics with politics, which we are witnessing in the neighbouring country, where it would seem as if the ideal world were about to overrun the real. In that country speculatists and theorists are now *frontibus adversis pugnantis*. Let us, in good time, avoid the infection.

Sir, it is my firm opinion that there is no grievance existing in this country which we cannot correct, without calling in the advice of a theorist. While the people are enjoying the highest degree of freedom and felicity, why should we try to persuade them that they are all the time in misery and slavery? While we are feeling the blessings of peace and plenty, why should a thought come into our heads that we are unwell, and must have recourse to medicine? This is like the story in the Spectator, of a man in good health, who had read medical books till he fancied that he had every symptom of the gout upon him, *except pain*. Let me entreat the house not to fall into the state of this imaginary valetudinarian. Let us not fancy that our Constitution stands in need of the specifics which are offered to us, trifling and harmless as they are represented to be. Once received, they may, like the puncture of a man's arm, bring on disorders that are dangerous to the whole body; and the Constitution, now healthy and flourishing, may fall to cureless ruin.

Mr. Pitt, though he approved generally of the measure of a Reform in Parliament, wished it to be postponed till a more favourable moment, and in order to avoid a specific vote on the subject, proposed a motion of adjournment. Mr. Powys, Mr. Secretary Grenville, and Mr. Burke, spoke against the proposed Reform; and Mr. Fox in favour of it, though he recommended Mr. Flood to withdraw his motion, which was accordingly done.

REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES.

DECEMBER 13th, 1792.

HIS MAJESTY'S Speech from the Throne, on opening the session, having been read by the Speaker, the Lord Mayor moved an Address, which contained the following passages :

"It has been impossible for us not to perceive, from our own observation in different parts of the country, the increased activity with which seditious practices have of late been openly renewed; and we learn, with concern, that not only a spirit of tumult and disorder (the natural consequences of such practices) has shown itself in acts of riot and insurrection, which required the interposition of a military force in support of the civil magistrate, but that the industry employed to excite discontent has appeared to proceed from a design to attempt, in concert with persons in foreign countries, the destruction of our happy constitution, and the subversion of all order and government.

"We entertain a just sense of the temper and prudence which have induced Your Majesty to observe a strict neutrality with respect to the war on the continent, and uniformly to abstain from any interference in the internal affairs of France; but, at the same time, we cannot but participate in the just uneasiness with which Your Majesty must observe any indications of an intention to excite disturbances in other countries, to disregard the rights of neutral nations, and to pursue views of conquest and aggrandizement, and particularly to adopt measures towards Your Majesty's allies, the States General, inconsistent with the laws of nations, and the positive stipulations of existing treaties.

"The circumstances, which Your Majesty has been pleased to communicate to us, appear to have rendered it highly important, for the safety and interest of this country, that Your Majesty should have recourse to those measures of prevention and internal defence, with which Your Majesty is entrusted by law.

"We sincerely hope that these exertions, and the steps which Your Majesty has taken for augmenting your naval and military force, will have the happy tendency both to maintain internal tranquillity, and to render a firm and temperate conduct effectual for preserving the blessings of peace.

"Your Majesty may, at the same time, rely on our zealous concurrence in such measures as may prove to be necessary for the security of these kingdoms, and for the faithful performance of our engagements."

Mr. Fox moved an Amendment, "to express to His Majesty our most zealous attachment to the excellent constitution of this free country; our sense of the invaluable blessings which we derive from it, and our unshaken determination to maintain and preserve it; to assure His Majesty that, uniting

with all His Majesty's faithful subjects in these sentiments of loyalty to the Throne, and attachment to the constitution, we feel in common with them the deepest anxiety and concern, when we see those measures adopted by the executive government, which the law authorises only in cases of insurrection within this realm.

"That His Majesty's faithful Commons, assembled in a manner new and alarming to the country, think it their first duty, and will make it their first business, to inform themselves of the causes of this measure, being equally zealous to enforce a due obedience to the laws on the one hand, and a faithful execution of them on the other.

Mr. WINDHAM rose immediately after Mr. Fox, and said, that strange as it might seem, he should vote this night with those whose measures he had uniformly and conscientiously reprobated, in opposition to those whose political sentiments on almost every occasion were in unison with his own. It might appear extraordinary that he should be found defending the measures of persons with whom he had been so long in political hostility, and in some degree reprobating the principles of some of his political associates. He had his attachments, he confessed, and those attachments in lesser considerations might have some influence even upon his judgment. But upon a subject of the importance of the present, he was determined to be governed solely by a sense of duty.—Indeed, he had often given his opinion in that house, that in the year 1784 most unconstitutional measures had been adopted, and unconstitutional principles maintained; and, on the same grounds, he had often since reprobated the conduct of ministers, who had pretty uniformly adhered to the system upon which they had come into power; nay, he was of opinion, that to the proceedings of 1784, we might ascribe the evils of our present situation; but the question now was, whether they were right in the present instance? and here he confessed he could not agree with his Right Honourable friend (Mr. Fox) in almost any of the sentiments he had expressed that night.—They differed either on principle, or on the application of principle, on all the points of this subject. The foundation, however, of their difference lay in the state of this country at the present moment. "Was the country at this moment in a state of danger, ay or no?" He was told, he said, that there was no real cause for alarm among the people; that the only alarm that was felt had been created by Government. Government must certainly have had strange and wonderful powers, indeed, to produce the alarm every day expressed in different parts. No, there were serious and well-founded alarms from the conduct, not of the officers of Government, but from those who had sworn an enmity to all Government.

—Did not the whole country feel it? Was not every town,

village, and hamlet filled with apprehension? Could a man enter into his own house, or could he walk in a field, without observing that it occupied the whole of the attention of all ranks and descriptions of people? This was what his Right Honourable Friend had been pleased to make a matter of argument, but what was really mere matter of observation; a man should not reason on the probability or improbability of these events; but should observe upon the fact, and attend to the relation of others. If a man confined himself in one room of his own house, he would know no more of what was going on in the next, than he would know what was going on in another country; but if he chose to be vigilant, he might know a good deal more. So in the present case, if a man would not believe any thing but what he saw, nor see any thing but what he liked, it was not very probable that he would discover much of the alarm in question. But if he was at the pains to observe, the alarm was visible enough. Had he observed it? Yes. He had seen the intention of the enemies of the present constitution expressed in various shapes. He had seen it in the confidence of their agents; in the boldness of those who wished the subversion of the constitution. He appealed to the house, whether they did not know and feel that there was a general alarm all over the country. The next point to be considered, in the order which his Right Honourable Friend had taken, was how far it might be fit to check the cause of this mischief by law, the question of the policy of doing which he had determined in the negative. It was true that the measures now pursued over the country, were such as had never been employed before; but it must be observed, in answer to this, that there never had been such an occasion before. Speculative opinions had been published from time to time in this country, and they might have been continued to be published, but the manner of publishing, as well as the works published of late, were entirely new. He believed the society for Constitutional Information began the system now pursued; it was soon transplanted into another country, in the fertile soil of which it had thriven so well as to overthrow all order, and establish confusion. Having had this glorious effect by transplantation, it was now brought to this country, for the purpose of producing the same effect. The machine was so well constructed, there were such skill, contrivance, and management, in the engineers, that unless parliament were on their guard, and the sensible and honest part of the community, active in counteracting their designs, the whole form of our Government might be easily subverted. He spoke not from distrust merely, or rumour, but he knew, and it was notorious that there had been, and was now, a constant communication between persons in Paris, and persons in London,

the object of which was the destruction of our present form of Government. This sort of counter alliance of the Englishman in Paris, and the Frenchman in London, had been regularly formed, and the effect of it was felt already in an alarming degree; for in every town, in every village, nay, almost in every house, these worthy gentlemen had their agents, who regularly disseminated certain pamphlets; these agents were vigilant and industrious, delivered these pamphlets gratis, a proof there must be somewhere a society to defray the expense, for these agents could not afford to be thus generous to the public without assistance; they could not pay for them out of their own pockets. No, the whole was a well-arranged methodized plan, for gradually undermining the principles of the British constitution. This was not all, they proceeded with the solemnity of an oath, which was, that they were to be ready—Here the confusion arising from the loud cries of "Prove! prove!" and "Hear! hear!" interrupted him for a few seconds—when

MR. BURKE (*called to order.*) He observed that a gentleman was asserting a fact which he was satisfied could be proved, and a convenient season would soon arise for that purpose, that was, when there should be an inquiry into this business: but there could be no good reason why any gentleman delivering his sentiments should give up the sources of his information in this stage of the business. There might be good reason why they should not now be exposed.

MR. WINDHAM then proceeded: he had heard long ago of the truth of what he had just been stating from very unquestionable authority—indeed he had been informed of it by an Honourable Member of that house, but it was not a fact of any great consequence. The system he had alluded to, had been carried on all over the country, more or less in the northern part of this kingdom; great pains had been taken with the poorer part of the community, to wean their affections from Government—and it was very strongly suspected, that the whole plan was supported by a purse which was believed to be made up in France; this he did not know, but he believed it to be the case. In answer to this, it might be answered that the French were not likely to contribute much money, having little or none to spare upon this or any other such occasion, to which the reply was obvious. Those who are in a state of desperation, have always the most money to squander upon acts of profligacy and dishonour; besides, poor and wretched as they were, yet such sums however large to individuals could not be of any great consequence to a nation. The manner in which this business was conducted, was very artful. On putting these works of sedition into the hands of the labourer, they always told him they were intended for his instruction. They

represented their societies as places for the instruction of the lower class. The proper meaning of fair instruction was by education to teach a man a mode of reasoning. But this instruction was nothing more than a general conveyance of particular opinions. Again, they said that their object was the propagating truth, and the improvement of the condition of man; how well these points have been gained we had recent instances. It was an attempt to reverse the order of society altogether. From the pulpit we had been accustomed to hear laid down, as the foundation of all happiness, obedience to the laws. From the Jacobin Club nothing was inculcated but disobedience to the law; and the doctrine that those who make laws in this country have no competent authority to make laws. These sentiments, if generally received, would very speedily overturn all order and government. The art with which these sentiments were introduced among the lower classes of society was consummate; they pretended that they taught nothing but philosophical truths; but instead of arguing philosophically in their books they made round assertions, and they acted wisely for their purpose by so doing; for the persons to whom they addressed themselves, were incapable of pursuing a subject logically from premises to conclusion, nor would this mode of reasoning suit their cause. Not even these assertions were made, until they had prepared the mind to receive them; they gained the affections first by flattering the passions, and then they proceeded to instruct, as they termed it. Whether the law, even in the freest country in the world, ought to permit every man to preach what doctrines he thought fit, and gain over as many proselytes as he could, was a question that had often been suggested, and which he should determine in the negative; for these truths, as they were termed, would dwindle into nothing, if the sentiment built upon them could be seen, and the consequences of them anticipated; but these poor peasants had not the power of deducing consequences, and therefore they listened to assertion.—Nor could he see the harm there was of preventing all endeavours to explain to a poor, illiterate fellow, whose extent of powers was but barely adequate to the task of procuring food for his own subsistence, points which had divided the opinions of the ablest writers. He saw no great loss to society from putting an end to public-house political clubs, and ale-house debates on politics; in short, he saw no reason why they should not be altogether suppressed. Next came the question, where will you draw the line, whom will you take up, and whom will you suffer to pass by; or, shall no man give his opinion upon the constitution? He said, he could not distinguish in this case by any previous principle, which must depend, as all acts in the law did, upon the discretion of a competent tribunal, a jury. This point

he illustrated by several observations upon the various denominations of homicide and libels. But would he call that treason in duodecimo, which was innocent in quarto? that was what he did mean, because much of the guilt in these cases depended upon the *quo animo*; and he who printed seditious sentiments would take care, if he intended mischief, that they should be within the reach of the lowest order. Many of these persons, it seems, had been calumniated by imputing to them motives which they did not avow, and intentions which they denied; this observation was specious, but not solid, for it was well known they did intend what they did not profess, and this was demonstrable by their actions; some indeed, when questioned, confessed a direct intention of subverting our Government. If they were asked if they were friends to our Government, they answered, yes. But they wanted no King, they wanted no Lords—all they wanted was a perfect representation of the people. Such a constitution would no more be the constitution of England than the constitution of Venice; in short, their view was to destroy all hereditary right, and perhaps afterwards to attempt an equalization of property; for one of their books stated, that a country could not be said to be truly free, where there was so much inequality among its members. Some Gentlemen affected to treat these things with contempt, but they ought not, in his mind, to be so regarded. It was true, the high ranks of life were not contaminated by these infamous principles; but if they were to cast their eyes downward, they would see there lurking underneath a sort of subterranean heat, that might burst forth with prodigious violence, if not immediately extinguished.

With regard to the combined armies that marched towards the capital of France, he believed their motives were good, and therefore he wished them success; and so he should, had their motives been ever so bad: that which they opposed, was worse than any consequence that could have resulted from their success. He had been told, indeed, that no country ought to intermeddle with the internal affairs of another; this might be right in a limited sense, but it could not be so to the length insisted upon by some modern politicians; he could conceive many instances in which it ought to be departed from. Two nations might quarrel—one might be clearly in the right, and the other clearly in the wrong; the continuance of their contest might affect the interest of a third nation. Such a nation had a right to interfere. But did France pursue only her own internal regulation? Did she keep good faith in her decree, "That she abandoned for ever all ideas of foreign conquest?" She professed, indeed, good will to all mankind, but before a Frenchman could be faithful, his nature must be changed.—It was their object to lower this country, and

in that they would persist until they should accomplish their wishes, if possible.—What was to be said for them in the war against the King of Sardinia? Still worse was their conduct at Geneva; but, above all, who would applaud their decree, “to give liberty to mankind?” Was it not avowing an intention to disturb every power in Europe? They talked, indeed, of giving to every place where their arms were victorious, a choice of the form of Government; but did they wait for the sense of the majority? Not they indeed. When two or three were gathered together, &c. that was enough for them. What were their intentions with respect to this country? Refer to the correspondence of the Jacobin club of Manchester and the Jacobin club of Paris. Did any man believe that they would hesitate to bring an army into the heart of this country, if they thought themselves safe in so doing? but they did not so much depend upon themselves as they did upon their bullies in other countries. Thus, from all circumstances, minute in themselves, but of the most serious importance when combined, it would appear that the alarm was not fictitious, but real. Ministers therefore, in point of principle, had acted rightly in calling out the militia. They might be a little irregular in point of form, but as they had observed the spirit of the constitution, they had his cordial support.

Mr. Secretary Dundas, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Anstruther supported the address: Mr. Grey, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Erskine spoke in favour of the Amendment. The house divided,

For the Address	290
Against it	50
Majority	<u>240</u>

HABEAS CORPUS SUSPENSION ACT.

JANUARY 5th, 1795.

MR. SHERIDAN moved for leave "to bring in a Bill, to repeal an Act passed in the last session of Parliament, empowering His Majesty to secure and detain such persons as shall be suspected of conspiring against his Person and Government."

MR. WINDHAM (Secretary at War) said, that there were so many of his Honourable Friends more capable than he could presume to be, of answering the various topics which had been brought into argument by the Honourable Gentleman who had just sat down, that he should not have troubled the house with any observations at that early period of the debate, were it not that personal allusion had been frequently made to himself in the course of that Gentleman's elaborate declamation.—The first topic which he would notice, was the Honourable Gentleman's remark upon some words which fell from him respecting a Right Honourable Gentleman on the other side of the house (Mr. Fox,) whom, whether he called so or not, he certainly would consider as a friend. This was a subject which he had long remarked some Honourable Gentlemen had a great propensity to bring into discussion; he had before been obliged to make animadversions upon it, as it was, to say no worse of it, extremely officious; and however the Honourable Gentlemen might flatter themselves that it conduced to their views, he would hazard an assertion, that such intermeddling did not give satisfaction to either party. As the matter, however, had been brought on the tapis, he would fully explain that which he had, already, as he thought, explained before. What he had said on a former day, and what he would then repeat, was, that for mutual accommodation he would, though he retained the sentiment, discontinue the usual form of address, and had given for his reason, that, standing with each other on a different footing from what they had formerly done, he might, by persisting in it, force his Right Honourable Friend into restraint or embarrassment. This he avowed to be the real meaning of his expressions, and this he fancied must still be in the recollection of every one present; he put it to the Honourable Gentleman himself to declare whether it was not the handsomest mode of deporting himself; had he done otherwise, those who had thought proper to bring the subject under notice, might say that he acted with the insidious intention of promoting that restraint and embarrassment which, in truth, he wished to avoid.

If this was an error, he confessed it to be an error of deliberation, and one in which he certainly meant to persist.

The Honourable Gentleman had endeavoured to persuade the house, that the conduct of the persons who promoted the war was criminal; and that he (Mr. Windham) was more criminal than any of its abettors. He was desirous to avow, that, on the footing on which the Honourable Gentleman had stated it, he was indeed criminal. If it were criminal to have seen, at a very early period, (but not so early as he could wish he had,) that the conduct of the French was likely to involve Great Britain in warfare and confusion, and to be convinced that, in her own defence, as well as from principles of justice and policy, she should have declared war before she did, then, certainly, he was most highly so. But that, he hoped, was the very utmost extent of his criminality; and of his firmness and resolution, to which the Honourable Gentleman had alluded, he would answer for it, that he never would be found to shrink from any charges that might be brought against him, nor be deterred by the empty menace of any set of men, from the constant and zealous discharge of the trust reposed in him, and from the most unremitting vigilance against every thing that had the face of hostility to his country or himself, particularly the politics of the Honourable Gentleman.

The Honourable Gentleman had said, that, in discussing the subject in agitation, he would deal with him with the utmost frankness. He wished, for the Honourable Gentleman's own sake, as well as that of the house, the subject, and himself, that he had coupled another thing along with it, and used him with fairness as well as with frankness. He had, however, done quite the reverse, and given the most unfair and unaccountable construction to all that he had said. Had there been any thing in his mode of expressing himself at all ambiguous, candour would have taken it rather upon the favourable side; whereas, the Honourable Gentleman had made use of a supposed ambiguity to pervert his meaning, and substituted his own suppositions in the place of facts. He declared, and called for the house to bear witness for him, that he had not, in using the words *acquitted felon*, at all alluded to the persons lately acquitted: on this point, it was to be lamented by the Honourable Gentleman's admirers and advocates, that all his tragic declamations, all his deep-toned, fine-spun periods, fell at once to ruin, the foundation itself being thus withdrawn from under them. For himself he declared what he had said was this—When the Honourable Gentleman had endeavoured, with so little judgment, and so little effect, to demonstrate that the acquittal of those men (whether they are called felons or culprits, for he was almost afraid to call them by any name, lest he should be misinterpreted) had entirely proved the

non-existence of a conspiracy to overthrow the Government, as well as their own individual innocence, he had said, that they were proved innocent to no greater an extent than numberless other persons who were discharged from the Old Bailey; not from their innocence being established in a moral point of view, but from want of legal proof of their guilt. This exultation of the Honourable Gentleman and the persons acquitted, they shared with many culprits who, though absolutely guilty, are discharged from failure of prosecution, from a flaw in the indictment, or from any other of those various legal points, under cover of which the guilty sometimes skulk away from the arm of justice, and strut about afterwards, talking of remedy by actions at law, and pluming themselves upon their accidental escape, as if their integrity and uprightness had been positively proved and established in the opinion of their country. Here, he said, he would rest the point for the present, and hoped that the Honourable Gentleman would not oblige him to revive it again, nor do as he had often done before, that is to say, make a watch-word of it, and, by the most unfair and insidious means, propagate and pass it current throughout the world, as if it had never been contradicted—the most unjust and unmanly way of sapping fair fame and reputation that any one could devise. The Honourable Gentleman had said much of spies and informers. It was a melancholy consideration to reflect, that such men were often necessary, and he feared they would be more wanting than ever, in the situation in which the politics of the Honourable Gentleman and his friends were likely to plunge the country. The Honourable Gentleman, who, in all things, was more than commonly shrewd and acute, had the most extraordinary faculties he ever knew any one to possess for the purpose of raising groundless charges, and the most extraordinary industry and art in giving them circulation: one, he said, he would particularly mention,—one originating in falsehood, and afterwards circulated with a wicked industry, which spoke too plainly to be misunderstood, what their drift was who managed it. The expression was the well-known hackneyed "*Perish Commerce*." It was necessary, he thought, to refer to the many revivals of it, which the malignity and wicked designs of some men had occasioned—after being made a handle of in various quarters, all of which he suffered to pass in contemptuous silence; he again found it revived in a letter published a few days ago, by a person of too great rank to be overlooked (Lord Lauderdale.) Two years ago, Mr. Windham observed, this falsehood was first circulated, and what would tend to develop the intentions of the calumniators, it was most carefully disseminated, where it was supposed to be most likely to do him injury: it was, in short, printed, and stuck up in

the workshops of Norwich, to alienate the affections of the people from him, and persuade them that he was their worst enemy; again it was brought up in the house against him by those who well knew in their hearts that the expression was not his. But he was silent, and that silence was taken for an admission of the fact.—“Now, Sir,” said he, “What will you think, if you shall see that this has been brought up again in this volume which I hold in my hand, stamped with the authority of a Noble Peer? (*Vide Letters to the Peers of Scotland, by the Earl of Lauderdale, page 18.*) Did not the Noble Writer know that the charge was publicly and unjustly attributed to me? and did he not intend, by the way he puts it here, that it should be applied to me, and considered as my words?—if not, what did he mean?”

MAJOR MAITLAND rose and said, he should not have troubled the house, and most particularly to interrupt the Right Honourable Gentleman, did he not believe he could save some time to the house by explaining the case; the Noble Earl, a relation of his, had asked him, if it was that Right Honourable Gentleman who had made use of that expression which was reported to have come from authority; he informed his noble relation it was not, and the expression had never been applied to that Right Honourable Gentleman. The Colonel said, he trusted that the character of that Noble Earl for candour, sincerity, and honour, was such as not to entitle any man in that house, or this country, to suspect him of doing any thing that was illiberal.

MR. WINDHAM continued—I am rather surprised at the explanation, as it confirms the full extent of my charge, which is, that the noble author of the work knew that the sentiment had been falsely imputed to me, and yet sent it forth to the world under the authority of his name uncontradicted. In the same work there is another passage to the same effect, which, noticing the Rockingham party, says, that the Duke of Portland, Earl Fitzwilliam, Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, and some others, attended meetings for a Parliamentary Reform; which, as far as relates to myself, I deny, and believe unfounded as to the rest. I challenge any one to assert that I ever, either in or out of parliament, contended for that object, which I cannot but regard as a degeneration instead of a Reform of Parliament. In this house I have uniformly opposed it; and before I had the honour of a seat here, I refused to stand for the city of Westminster, though I might have been returned, because I knew the inhabitants at that time were attached to schemes of Reform. These facts being notorious, I am at a loss to perceive the candour and fairness of the Noble Lord in circulating reports which he must know to be unfounded. This system of misrepresentation is in my mind much more injurious, than that so much complained of about spies and informers.

There is no calculating the evil which it may produce in times of trouble and commotion. It was thus, that early in the French Revolution, Foulon was massacred, because it was reported that he had said, "he would make the people eat grass." The influence and dangerous tendency of these *party catch-words* could not be stronger exemplified than in the hackneyed phrase of "Swinish Multitude;" the sense of which expression was completely distorted from that in which it was applied, in the beautiful passage where it was originally made use of. Can any one doubt what was intended by this gross and unmanly perversion of its meaning, if, unfortunately for this country, the party that perverted it had obtained their ends, and fully seated themselves in power? On one point of the Honourable Gentleman's main argument I cannot forbear some remarks. He says, that the persons tried are completely innocent, because they are acquitted. Does he mean then totally to disregard the presumption of guilt which was cast on them by the finding of the Grand or Accusing Jury? Setting this aside, is there any doubt but that the verdict of a jury pronounces only that the parties were not in a legal sense guilty? But there is a vast medium between legal guilt and moral innocence; and besides, there might be various stages even of legal guilt short of the specific charges brought against them. As a legislative body, however, we are not to seek the verdict of a jury to guide us; we must look to presumption and probability, and govern our conduct by their evidence. The Honourable Gentleman, in the same spirit of misrepresentation, has made me deny the distresses of the poor, and sympathised himself as usual in an extraordinary degree with the poor of Norwich; whereas, I appeal to the recollection of the house, whether I did not bar and anticipate this misconception and application to the poor of that town. I said, that the distresses of the war were not great, and that those who most loudly complained of them had not felt their pressure at all, not so much as in the relinquishment of the most trifling luxury; and between the rich and poor there is an indissoluble bond and mutual dependence. They are not separate interests, but one, neither of which can be affected without operating in the same proportion on the other. My assertions are thus answered. I said, that a certain description of people had not felt the burden of which they had complained. He answers me, that others do. I said, that no burdens were at present felt. He answers me, that they will be felt. What course of candour and fair reasoning is a match for this shifting subtlety? Is it, I ask, a culpable degree of aristocracy, to deny the competence of the lower orders of society in questions of peace and war? The direct object of any war must be allowed trifling, compared to the expense of men and treasure, which the most successful termination could be

estimated at. It is the remote and complicated objects of war that form the justification of the measure, and neither the ability nor information of the poor enable them to be fit judges of these subjects. It was the great art of people who pretended to think otherwise, to rouse the passions of the people, and not to inform or exercise their judgments, for which they had in fact the most sovereign contempt. In any war which those gentlemen might or ever had approved, would they consult those opinions which they now thought proper to exalt into consequence for purposes of their own? They ask where is the conspiracy, and deny its existence, because there is not legal and technical proof. They contend that there is no danger, because the danger happens not to fall within the precise line of former example. Whereas the danger now is entirely of the novel kind. A new order of things is looked for, and every previous right and established law is regarded as antiquated prejudice, and inimical to the interests of the people. But can Gentlemen, after expatiating on the precise limits of ancient treason, turn short round and say, that there is no danger, because it is not precisely of that kind which ancient experience pointed out, and guarded against? In those days, the life of the Monarch was in danger directly, and that offence was dreaded, and guarded against. Now we have to look to the base and insidious incitement of the lower orders, as the prevailing vice. Every bad and restless passion is called forth under pretence of right and reason. The natural and inevitable distress, which is inherent under all governments, is made the ground of accusation against that constitution which secures to us the least proportion of those evils which ever existed in one community. I mean not to impute any censure to the jurymen who acquitted the persons accused, as the charge was apparently remote from the death of His Majesty; and plain and honest men are not always possessed of that strength and search of understanding which is necessary to detect cunning and concerted fraud. Many shades of distinction might reasonably be supposed to occur to them from the length and intricacy of the case; and wherever doubt occurs, a jury is universally inclined to acquit. It is curious, however, to remark, that when the report of the secret committee was brought forward, it was said, what is your proof, where is your evidence of the facts? And from the silence on these heads it was inferred, that no proof existed. Now the facts, however, are established upon oath, yet fresh objections are instantly stated. On my part, I cannot wish for a more complete refutation of all these patriotic doubts and surmises relative to the plots, than the bare and simple reading of the documents produced in evidence. In this much-vaunted respect for the verdict of a jury, I think that I perceive something of a confined view; for this verdict

seems only immaculate and conclusive when it acquits, and instantly when it convicts, its whole nature is changed; *so instanti* the jury become, as by the touch of a magic wand, transformed into a packed set of hirelings. Who can forbear this observation, who sees the same man celebrate the jury who acquitted Hardy, Tooke, and Thelwall, who had before thought so little of the jury that had condemned Watt and Downie, though their verdict was backed by the confession of the convict, in a state when every man's word was taken, namely, on the point of death. In all the praises of verdicts, this verdict had, by some strange accident, been kept out of sight. We state that there have been plans and views, call them conspiracies, or by any other name, of the most mischievous nature, to stir up and incite the poor to dissatisfaction and tumult, and finally to insurrection and plunder. But who shall want converts, who tell the poor that the rich are usurpers, and that they have a right to reprisals? Should this be said only to exist in theory, we recur to the practice of a great nation, who had more than realized the most terrible expectations of the most timid. These modern engineers knew better than to attack the life of a king directly, and therefore think to elude the provisions of the statutes of treason; they, on the contrary, approach the walls of the town by regular siege, and the Honourable Gentleman contends that we are from the walls to see them, without molestation, complete their works and prepare their mines. To satisfy us of the great prudence and propriety of this conduct, he adverts to a novel and extravagant philosophical doctrine of national character, which he thinks totally unconnected with soil and situation; but did it never occur to him, that whatever influence government may have on character, character originally modifies government, and is therefore the prime cause of the ultimate effect. Among other paradoxes he seems to have found out, that nations have no character in common, and are not to take any example from each other.

In speaking of the present corruption and depravity of France, he refers all to the effect of the old government; whereas we find that these effects increase in the exact proportion as the new government recedes from the old, and becomes distinctly established. This paradox, however, is not new with the Honourable Gentleman, of attributing all the errors and excesses of the present state of France to the ancient Government, and he seems to adhere to it with all the phrenzy and fondness which men usually show to their most extravagant opinions. If, indeed, this deplorable effect were owing to the old government of France, we should see its effect follow up closely the destruction of that system; whereas nothing could be greater than the exit of that government which now lies buried under the ruins of all that was excel-

lent in the country. The Honourable Gentleman has another solution also for this difficulty, namely, the war. The war, he says, has conduced to this state of savage desperation in which we find France. But why, it might be asked, have not other wars and similar difficulties produced the same effect in other nations? Because they were not debased and corrupted by the governments which directed them. This is, however, the poor and common resort of all empirics. If the case does not succeed, it is from this thing or that, and every thing but their own ignorance and want of skill. They were called in too late, the previous treatment was bad, and killed the patient before they came. Mean, paltry, and unworthy argument!

The Honourable Gentleman asks if the example of the people of France is more to be dreaded here than that of Kings in Europe, whom with him we might have been induced to call despots, if the liberty of France had not buried all former despotism in the excess of its cruelty and oppression. Triumphant as this argument may seem, nothing is more easily answered. If you reduce the people of this country to the miserable state of the people of France, they will act the same, from the operation of the paramount and leading features of our nature. So, if you reduce a King of England to the state of the monarchs of Europe, he will act the same. What we deplore and deprecate, is the attempt by sly and insidious means to seduce the people of this country from the noble and honest character they had for ages possessed. The main question between us now is, whether these associations honestly and really proposed, however erroneously, a parliamentary reform, as it is called, or, under that pretence, the utter subversion of the constitution? Let any man look to the evidence on the late trials, and say honestly from his heart which was in view.

There was another object of the Honourable Gentleman's animadversion and censure, which however was so general and loose, that I find not so much difficulty in answering as in understanding it. Some charges can no more be replied to, than the scolding of a fishwoman in Billingsgate. Does the Honourable Gentleman mean to say that it is dishonourable to accept of office?—[No, from the other side.] No! Then if he gives up that, he gives up all that he has advanced on that subject. The calumnies cast on such things are only to be resisted by the shield of character; to that my Noble Friends and I resort. I am truly sorry the Honourable Gentleman is not ashamed of such low, mean traffic. I defy him to show a single circumstance that can tend to cast the shadow of doubt on our conduct. The malice of the design is so corrected by the impotency of the effort, that I will not sacrifice a word in answering it. The Honourable

Gentleman has asked me why I did not continue, as at first, to give honourable support to ministers, without joining them. Would not support, without responsibility annexed to it, be mean, be dishonest? In fact, if I had not come into an ostensible office, where would the Honourable Gentleman have found that responsible character with which he threatens me in future. Of these personal allusions I can only recollect one more, namely, that if I took an ostensible office, I should have resigned the emolument of it. Does he mean this as a general principle; and if not, why is the exception to be made? As often as this notion has been agitated, it has as often been rejected by the best and wisest of men, and all attempts to reduce it to practice have been regarded as a mean and paltry lure to popularity. He is called upon, therefore, to explain himself more fully on this head, and should disdain to come forward with dark assertions, which he dare not openly avow. I think I have now noticed all the parts of the Honourable Gentleman's speech, which had a personal allusion, either to me or the eminent characters who came into office at the same time. The more general topics of his speech I shall leave to the refutation, as I promised in my outset, of those who are equally ready and more able than I am.

Mr. Hardinge followed Mr. Windham, and declared that the sentiment of "Perish Commerce, let the Constitution live," had proceeded from him, and not from Mr. Windham.

Mr. Erskine, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Sheridan supported the motion; Serjeant Adair opposed it. On a division, there appeared,

For the Motion	41
Against it	185
Majority	<u>144</u>

TAX ON DOGS.

APRIL 25th, 1796.

THE order of the day being read for the commitment of the Dog Tax Bill, Mr. Dent (with whom the bill had originated) moved, "That the Speaker should leave the chair." Mr. Sheridan opposed the Bill.

MR. WINDHAM (Secretary at War) said he did not mean to object to the whole of the bill, but to part of it only. He thought a tax upon all sporting dogs fair, because they are a kind of luxury, and their owners can afford to pay. But he thought there was a passion, spleen, and enmity, against the canine race, in the formation of the bill, that amounted really to a principle of extirpation. From the tenor of it he should have been apt to imagine that Actæon had revived, or that some fabulous divinitie had descended to pronounce an eternal ban and curse on the whole race of dogs. They certainly at times were disagreeable, and he had felt that inconvenience; but he should have been loath to have gone, in consequence, to avenge himself on the whole species. It was unworthy of this or any other country, to levy a rate on any animal, because that animal was not employed in tilling ground, or because the poor might feed on dogs' provisions. It appeared as if there was not room enough on earth for men and dogs. The Honourable Gentleman had entered into several calculations to show the number of dogs and the quantity of provisions they consumed; but he seemed to forget that there was a great quantity of waste which they destroyed, which, if they were annihilated, would become a greater nuisance. He seemed to imagine, that all the refuse, now given to dogs, would go to human creatures. No such thing; for they consume a great quantity of offal, which could not well be otherwise disposed of, and consequently his calculation of the quantity of provisions was exceedingly erroneous. He had also excited an alarm upon this head, by observing that population increases with provision. So it does, but not if there be a greater quantity of provisions than the consumers require. How much of the produce of the earth goes to other purposes than the food of man? Does not the Honourable Gentleman himself give to his coach-horses and his saddle-horses, what would serve for human food? But when you consider the sustenance of men, you are to consider their comforts and enjoyments also; or if you do not, we shall revert to rudeness and barbarism. Now, as to that part of the bill which related to the

dogs of the poor, his objections were too numerous to be repeated. Some dogs are retained by the poor as implements of trade, and the Legislature ought not to tax the industry, but the expenditure, of the people. Some were retained for their companionable qualities; and when the fidelity and winning attachment of a dog was remembered, it was unkind to propose a plan which should tend to destroy him. Dogs kept for sporting, were peculiar to the rich, and though he did not mean to arraign sporting, he thought it not the highest sort of amusement, inasmuch as it reduced the hunter to the condition of the animal he hunted. With the rich, it might be taxed; but with the poor, the affection for a dog was so natural, that in poetry and painting it had been constantly recorded, and in any sort of domestic representation, we scarcely see a picture without a memorial of this attachment. If the rich man feels a partiality for a dog, what must a poor man do, who has so few amusements?—A dog is a companion of his laborious hours; and when he is bereft of his wife and children, fills up the dreary vacuity. It is a well-known fact, that Alexander Selkirk, upon whose narrative the story of Robinson Crusoe was founded, cultivated the society of every animal upon the island, except those which he was obliged to kill for food. This was his greatest satisfaction, and a dog affords a similar satisfaction to the poor. Would the house then sacrifice that honest, virtuous satisfaction? An Honourable Gentleman behind him (Mr. Buxton) disapproved of any difference between the poor and rich, because he wished for equality, forgetting that equal burdens are laid upon unequal means, and that they ought to be proportioned in the same manner as rewards and punishments.—But although he wished the tax to be levied upon sporting dogs, he was a friend to the game laws, and to aristocratical distinctions; and he thought all the arguments that had been urged against the game laws were recommendations in their favour, provided they were not oppressive. He did not think that poor men kept dogs for the destruction of game, and he lived in a game country where he was qualified to judge; besides if a poacher wanted a dog for that purpose, he could afford to pay for it; so that, extending the tax to the poor, would be no protection to the game. As to the worrying of sheep, the dogs commonly kept by poor people were too small; for the dogs that worry sheep are pointers, hounds, lurchers, guard-dogs, &c. and whenever they are once guilty of that vice, they will never leave it off till they are destroyed; but, dead or alive, they hunt the animal, and have been known to tear the skins in tanners' yards. He was in perfect conformity with his Honourable Friend, when he did not wish to levy any assessment on the poor; for if people, distressed as some were who kept dogs, would deprive themselves of part of their food to keep

a dog, that was the best proof of the value of the animal, and he knew, if they were assessed, how likely they would be to be taken up by the parish officers. An Honourable Friend (Mr. Buxton) had said, that no person who receives relief from the parish ought to be allowed to keep a dog. He differed from him in opinion, because the whole class of labourers are liable to apply for relief on account of the unequal balance of their earnings and expenditure; for every accident or calamity subjects them to the necessity of making such application. It would be cruel and impolitic to pass such a law; it is a sort of law, from which every man would revolt. The dog is a companion to a solitary man, and to a man with a family a play-fellow for his children; and these considerations induced him to wish that satisfaction to be preserved to the poor. He had been led on by the subject farther than he intended; but he could not think of sacrificing any man's feelings to any consideration of interest which had been held out from the extension of the tax.

Mr. Courtenay and Mr. Pitt opposed the bill, which was thrown out without a division.

BULL-BAITING.

APRIL 18th, 1800.

THE order of the day being read for further considering the Report of the Committee on the Bill for preventing the practice of Bull-Baiting, Sir William Pulteney moved, "That the house do now consider further the said Report."

MR. WINDHAM spoke to the following effect:

Sir,

I RISE for the purpose of opposing the motion which has been made by the Honourable Baronet; and had I been present when this bill was in its former stages, I should have even then decidedly opposed it; for notwithstanding the gravity with which it was introduced, and the importance which seemed to be attached to it, I should certainly have thought it my duty to ask the house if they knew upon what it was that they were going to legislate. Let me now ask them what there is in Bull-Baiting, which they have suddenly found to be so alarming. It is no new practice; it has existed more than a thousand years, without having been supposed to be pregnant with any of those crying evils that are now ascribed to it. Is it pretended that it "has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished?" I, for one, cannot think that it has increased, nor can I see any necessity whatever for the interference of the legislature in order to diminish it. In my whole life, indeed, I have never been present but at two Bull-Baitings, and they happened while I was a school-boy; but I cannot say that I experienced any bad effects from the gratification of my curiosity. I did not find myself the worse for it, nor could I suspect that the other spectators were contaminated by the spectacle.

Sir, there are some persons to whom a legislative measure like this may appear serious and important; but for my own part, I cannot but look upon it as proceeding from a busy and anxious disposition to legislate on matters in which the laws are already sufficient to prevent abuse;—it at best only argues a *pruritus leges ferendi*, in the gratifying or opposing of which I cannot but think my time, and more especially that of the house, is most miserably employed. This house ought only to legislate when an act of legislature is gravely and generally called for; and not merely to gratify petty, personal and local motives, such as are infinitely

beneath the deliberate dignity of Parliament; especially in times like the present, when questions of vital importance are hourly pressing on our attention. Really, Sir, in turning from the great interests of this country and of Europe, to discuss with equal solemnity such measures as that which is now before us, the house appears to me to resemble Mr. Smirk, the auctioneer in the play, who could hold forth just as eloquently upon a ribbon as upon a Raphael. This petty, meddling, legislative spirit, cannot be productive of good: it serves only to multiply the laws, which are already too numerous, and to furnish mankind with additional means of vexing and harassing one another.

A great deal has lately been said respecting the state of the poor, and the hardships which they are suffering. But if they are really in the condition which is described, why should we set about to deprive them of the few enjoyments which are left to them? If we look back to the state of the common people in those countries with which our youthful studies make us acquainted, we find, that what with games, shows, festivals, and the institutions of their religion, their sources of amusement and relaxation were so numerous as to make them appear to have enjoyed a perpetual holiday. If we look to Catholic countries, it will also appear, partly, perhaps, from many festivals and ceremonies being adopted into their religion from the Pagan system, and afterwards so transformed as to incorporate with it, that they all enjoy many more amusements and a much longer time for relaxation than the poor in this country, who may say with justice, "Why interfere with the few sports that we have, while you leave to yourselves and the rich so great a variety? You have your carriages, your town-houses, and your country-houses; your balls, your plays, your operas, your masquerades, your card-parties, your books, your dogs, and your horses to amuse you—On yourselves you lay no restraint—But from us you wish to take the little we have."

In the South of France and in Spain, at the end of the day's labour, and in the cool of the evening's shade, the poor dance in mirthful festivity on the green, to the sound of the guitar. But in this country no such source of amusement presents itself. If they dance, it must be often in a marsh, or in the rain, for the pleasure of catching cold. But there is a substitute in this country, well known by the name of a *Hop*. We all know the alarm which the very word inspires, and the sound of the fiddle calls forth the magistrate to dissolve the meeting. Men bred in ignorance of the world, and having no opportunity of mixing in its scenes or observing its manners, may be much worse employed than in learning something of its customs from theatrical representations; but if a company of strolling players make their appearance in a

village, they are hunted immediately from it as a nuisance, except, perhaps, there be a few people of greater wealth in the neighbourhood, whose wives and daughters patronize them. Then the labouring people must have recourse to the public-house, where, perhaps, they get into conversation, and politics become the subject. That this is an employment sufficiently mischievous I am willing enough to admit. What are they to do then? Go home and read their bibles! This is, no doubt, very proper; but it would be well if the rich set them a little better example in this way. Whatever may be the habits of the more luxurious climates of the continent, the amusements of our people were always composed of athletic, manly, and hardy exercises, affording trials of their courage, conducive to their health, and to them objects of ambition and of glory. In the exercise of those sports they may, indeed, sometimes hurt themselves, but could never hurt the nation. If a set of poor men, for vigorous recreation, prefer a game of *cudgels*, instead of interrupting them, it should be more our business to let them have *fair play*; for victory is here to them an object of as much glory as greater men could aim at in a superior sphere. These sports are, in my mind, as fair an object of emulation and of fame, as those in which the higher classes are so proud to indulge; and here I am ready to agree with the poet, that, in other circumstances,

“He that the world subdued, had been
But the best wrestler on the green.”

Some little time since, it was thought matter of reproach for gentlemen to be present at any of these athletic trials; and even *boxing* was cried down as an exercise of ferocity. It is time to resist these unnecessary restraints; for, if this bill should pass into a law, it would no doubt be followed by other regulations equally frivolous and vexatious. It is idle to declaim against savage manners or dispositions in this country. The character of the people is directly the reverse; their sports are robust and hardy, but their tempers are not ferocious; nay, it is a fact, that there is not a people in the whole world that feel a greater horror at bloodshed. Compare them with the people of France or Italy, where all is suavity, sprightliness, and gaiety, and let us rejoice in the difference between the humanity of their characters. I will not say, whether certain principles, if suffered to operate, might not have produced sanguinary scenes here as well as in other places; but I can safely assert, that cruelty, or the thirst of blood, is not in the nature nor in the habits of Englishmen. On this subject, I may be permitted to make an allusion to an affray which lately took place in the Isle of Wight, in which some foreigners were engaged. Unfortunately, murder was the consequence of that scuffle, which,

amongst Englishmen, would have terminated in a black eye or a bloody nose. So congenial is this principle of humanity to the hearts of our people, and so uniformly displayed in their actions, that it might imply the suspicion of effeminacy, if they had not so often given, on all occasions, such glorious testimonies of courage and prowess in another way. In war they are prodigal of their own blood; but after the shock of battle, or the fury of an assault, their first sentiment is always shown in mercy to the vanquished; and it is not unfair to attribute to their manly amusements much of that valour which is so conspicuous in their martial achievements by sea and land. Courage and humanity seem to grow out of their wholesome exercises.

Sir, having premised thus much, I next come to consider this case of bull-baiting in particular. The sport here, it must be confessed, is at the expense of an animal which is not by any means a party to the amusement; but it at the same time serves to cultivate the qualities of a certain species of dogs, which affords as much pleasure to their owners as greyhounds do to others; and why should the butcher be deprived of his amusement any more than the gentleman? That peculiar breed of dogs, though now decreasing, and nearly extinct, has always been held in high estimation in this island. Gratian, who wrote as early as the age of Augustus, mentioned and described this animal, which, indeed, has always been so much a favourite, that many of our ships are called after its name. It is no small recommendation to bull-dogs, that they are so much in repute with the populace.

The advocates of this bill, Sir, proposed to abolish bull-baiting on the score of cruelty. It is strange enough that such an argument should be employed by a set of persons who have a most vexatious code of laws for the protection of their own amusements. I do not mean at present to condemn the game laws; but when Gentlemen talk of cruelty, I must remind them, that it belongs as much to shooting, as to the sport of bull-baiting; nay more so, as it frequently happens, that where one bird is shot, a great many others go off much wounded. When, therefore, I hear humane Gentlemen even make a boast of having wounded a number of birds in this way, it only affords me a further proof that savage sports do not make savage people. Has not the butcher as much right to demand the exercise of his sport, as the man of fortune to demand that of hunting? Is not the latter as painful to the horse, as the former to the bull? And do not Gentlemen, for the empty fame of being in at the death, frequently goad and spur their horses to exertions greatly beyond their strength? Might not the butcher say, "I have no coaches, horses, balls, masquerades, nor even books, which afford so much delight to those in higher stations, and who have more leisure time; do not there-

fore deprive me of the amusement I feel in setting the propensities of one animal against those of another." The common people may ask with justice, why abolish bull-baiting and protect hunting and shooting? What appearance must we make, if we, who have every source of amusement open to us, and yet follow these cruel sports, become rigid censors of the sports of the poor, and abolish them on account of their cruelty, when they are not more cruel than our own?

It may be said, that in bull-baiting the labouring poor throw away their money, and lose their time, which they ought to devote to labour, and that thus they themselves may become chargeable to the rich. But surely, if there be any set of men who ought to be left at liberty to dispose of their money as they choose, it ought to be the industrious labourers; and such men do not lose time by their amusements, but work harder and longer at other times, to make up for what time they may lose in relaxation, and to furnish them with additional money for the enjoyment of such recreations. I do not mean to speak against magistrates; on the contrary I am convinced of the value and importance of the services they render to the community, and of the general activity and propriety with which they discharge their duty; but I do think that many of them appear to act upon an opinion, that it is their duty at all times to control the common people in their amusements, like some to whom the care of children is committed, who think it right to deny them every thing which they seem eager to have or enjoy. They appear to act on the opinion, that the common people have nothing to do with any amusement; but ought only to eat, to sleep, and to work.

Upon the whole, Sir, there does not appear to me to be any real evil in the practice of bull-baiting; that it would be trifling to legislate upon such petty concerns, and that it is in the present case absurd, as the practice is already so much fallen into disuse, that it seems as if the bill has been brought in now lest it should be quite abolished before it could be passed. As to the cruelty of the practice, it is mere solemn mockery in Gentlemen to talk of it, while they themselves indulge in sports equally cruel. In a bull-baiting a hedge may be broken down, or a field of grass trodden down; but what is this compared to the injury by a pack of hounds, followed by horses and their riders, sweeping over fields and hedges without distinction? Accidents to the lookers-on do sometimes happen at bull-baiting; but I am sure that I have known more fatal accidents than ever happened from bull-baiting, arise in the county of Norfolk alone, (keeping out of the question those which have happened merely from the danger always attending the use of fire-arms) by quarrels between the game-invaders and the game-preservers, some being killed on the spot,

and others hanged afterwards for the murders. What then is the plea by which the bill is supported? It cannot be from sensibility and hatred of cruelty in those very Gentlemen who in the game-season, as it has been justly said, become their own butchers and poulterers.

Sir, I shall conclude by moving, "That the consideration of the report of the Committee on the Bill be delayed till this day six months."

Mr. Canning also opposed the Bill; Sir William Pulteney, Mr. Sheridan, and Sir Richard Hill, supported it. The house divided on Mr. Windham's Amendment,

Ayes	43
Noes	41
Majority against the Bill	2

MAY 24th, 1802.

Mr. DENT moved the order of the day, for the second reading of the Bill to prevent Bull-Baiting and Bull-Running. Sir Richard Hill having supported the measure,

Mr. WINDHAM said, that the evil complained of by the supporters of this bill, was not such as imperiously called for or justified the interference of the legislature. He deprecated the introduction of such a subject at a moment of such extreme anxiety, when the country was divided between hopes and fears, and there were so many things of importance to agitate men's bosoms. It was not an evil that had "grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength;" but, on the contrary, it had declined as they increased. In fact, it would be gone before the house would have time to legislate upon it.

Curremus precipites —————

Dum jacet in ripâ calcamus Cæsaris hostem.

An allusion had been made to a petition from Norwich on the subject; and an insinuation had been thrown out, that it was a practice generally prevalent in that neighbourhood. The fact, however, was, that on enquiry he himself had found that within the last twenty years only two instances were remembered of a bull-baiting in Norwich or its vicinity. Decreasing as the practice was all over the country, he could not but think that the discussion of such paltry local complaints was wholly unworthy of the

legislature of a great nation. It was part of a system of introducing subjects of a similar kind into parliament, which he could not omit the opportunity of reprobating in the strongest terms. The subject was in all points of view degrading; but it appeared more especially unworthy of being entertained by the imperial parliament, at a time when so many other subjects of great national importance were calling for the attention of the house. Such a sort of public interference with matters unworthy of the consideration of the legislature could be productive of no consequences but such as were mischievous. No law could be desirable which would be attended with no national advantage, and this advantage ought to be well weighed before a legislative enactment was required. A law in all cases necessarily involved a certain degree of restraint; and it was also to be taken into the account that it could not be carried into effect without vesting in those who were to enforce its provisions a considerable degree of discretion. If such a law as that now called for were to be passed, it could not act by a silent operation. On the contrary, it would be enforced by those who principally exerted themselves for the observance of the game-laws, and who, in enforcing its provisions, could not possibly escape a large share of public odium. Such was the subject now before the house, which contained nothing of public or general interest. To procure the discussion of such subjects, it was necessary to resort to canvass and intrigue. Members, whose attendance was induced by local considerations in most cases of this description, were present; the discussion, if any took place, was managed by the friends of the measure; and the decision of the house was perhaps ultimately a matter of mere chance. The present bill was precisely one of a similar description, and but from the circumstances of the subject having excited some attention in a former session, it might have been considered by chance, and agreed to without discussion.

On this general principle, then, he was inclined to oppose the discussion of the subject, as totally unworthy of the dignity of the house. But he had in the next place to object to the manner in which the subject of bull-baiting had been considered, not from a general view of the subject, but from a few insulated examples. The friends of the bill took a view of the practice complained of, merely as exhibited on a minute scale, and from them consequences were drawn. They put the bull and the dog as exhibited in a few instances, into the eye of their microscope, and through this confined medium desired the house to contemplate the general practice. The cruelties of the practice were the only circumstances held up to observation, and every thing else was kept out of view. But if this mode of viewing the subject were to be

adopted, he saw no reason why all other sports should not be contemplated in a similar manner. If the cruelty of Bull-baiting was thus to be held up to the attention of the house in such glaring colours, why were not hunting, shooting, fishing, and all other amusements of a similar description, to be judged of by similar principles? If the effects of the one were to be viewed through the medium of a microscope, why were not the consequences of the other to be scrutinized with equal severity? By viewing objects in this way, not only would false conclusions be drawn, but the objects themselves would appear inverted, and in a way never intended by nature. Things would not only not appear the same, but their whole aspect would be reversed.—Nothing could be more pleasing to the eye than the sight of female beauty; but even if the fairest complexion were contemplated through a microscope, deformities would appear, and hairs unobservable to the naked eye would present themselves as bristles on the back of a boar. Such attacks as the present on the amusements of the people struck him in no other light than as the first step to a reform of the manners of the lower orders. Those who, when young men, had formed projects for the reformation of Parliament, finding themselves disappointed in those projects, now formed the design of reforming the manners of the people. In their desires to accomplish this object, there were two great parties united, the Methodists and the Jacobins, though the objects they had in view by this change were essentially different. By the former, every rural amusement was condemned with a rigour only to be equalled by the severity of the Puritanical decisions. They were described as a part of the lewd sports and Anti-Christian pastimes which, in times of Puritanism, had been totally proscribed. Every thing joyous was to be prohibited, to prepare the people for the reception of their fanatical doctrines. By the Jacobins, on the other hand, it was an object of important consideration to give to the disposition of the lower orders a character of greater seriousness and gravity, as the means of facilitating the reception of their tenets; and to aid this design, it was necessary to discourage the practice of what was termed idle sports and useless amusements. This was a design which he should ever think it his duty strenuously to oppose. For, though he wished that the people might become more virtuous, more attentive to the duties of religion, better fathers, better husbands, better children, he could never agree that for this purpose their social habits should be changed; that they should prove more austere, more unsociable, and more self-conceited than they now were. Whenever he saw any steps taken to produce this effect, he could not consider them in any other light than as so many steps of a departure from the old English character. The habits long esta-

blished among the people were the best fitted to resist the schemes of innovation; and it was among the labouring and illiterate part of the people that Jacobinical doctrines had made the smallest progress. In this respect, indeed, it was otherwise with Methodist doctrines. They throve best on a stubborn soil; but they had the effect of preparing it for the reception of the doctrines of Jacobinism. In this work the two parties mutually over-reached each other. The party of the Methodists invited the people to read, and in the first instance they might peruse a few Jacobinical productions, that they might read with greater advantage their fanatical productions at a future period. In the same way the Jacobins wished to divert the people from every social pursuit; reading they strenuously recommended; and, though a few Methodistical books were, in the first instance, not wholly proscribed, they were allowed only to fit the mind for the reception of their poisonous tenets. The effect of their exertions was the same, though thus differently pursued. It was equally directed to the destruction of the old English character, by the abolition of all rural sports. So much convinced was he that this was the object of such a bill as the present, that he almost felt disposed to rest his opposition to it on this footing. Out of the whole number of the disaffected, he questioned if a single bull-baiter could be found, or if a single sportsman had distinguished himself in the Corresponding Society. The hunting for which they reserved themselves was of a noble kind; they disdained the low pursuits of ordinary sportsmen; the game against which their efforts were directed were of no less a quality than Kings.

When he spoke of this union of the Methodists and Jacobins, he did not mean to deny that, in their political principles, as well as their ultimate objects, they essentially differed. Religion was an ingredient in the character of the Methodists, which was directly hostile to the views of Jacobinism; for in the composition of modern Jacobinism, religion formed no part. But they were not, on serious consideration, so very far removed from each other as might, at first sight, appear. As a general assertion it would be admitted that hot water was farther removed from congelation than what was cold; but when the hot water was exposed to the air, it was more speedily frozen. In a similar manner, though, in the abstract, Methodism and Jacobinism seemed to be the farthest removed from each other, yet facts showed that the tenets of the one prepared the mind for the adoption of the doctrines of the other. In confirmation of this mutual design of these parties, the Right Honourable Member took occasion to quote a passage from the Memoirs of a rural Poet of considerable celebrity, (Bloomfield, author of the Farmer's Boy, &c. by a gentleman of respectable literary talents, Mr. Capel

Loft,) in which it is mentioned, that, the Poet was in the habit of spending his time in reading in his garret, or attending a debating society, which the editor recommends as a much more worthy mode of employing himself, than if he had been occupied with gambling, drinking, or fighting. Mr. Windham paid some very handsome compliments to the originality of many of the thoughts of this poet, to his natural simplicity and unaffected elegance of language. He wished what he now said to be considered as an unexaggerated declaration of his opinion of the skill of the author; and he hoped it would be considered as nothing improper when he added, that he wished this opinion, thus publicly delivered, to be viewed as an advertisement of the merit of the poem. But with this high opinion of the merits of the poet, he had doubts how far it was proper to encourage ideas of literary profit or renown in those who had been bred to a useful trade. In particular instances it might not be prejudicial; but to inculcate such notions as those contained in the passage of the *Memoirs* to which he had referred, could tend only to a mischievous purpose. He regretted the minuteness with which he was obliged to enter into the consideration of the subject, but threw the blame on those by whom such a subject was introduced—an examination of the bill was not less necessary than if it had referred to a subject of the highest national importance. To examine the character of a daub of Teniers was often a work of more difficulty than to describe the beauties of the *Madona of Raphael*.

He next proceeded to read an extract from a sermon, which he declared he should, in all probability, never have read, but from the circumstance of its having been sent to him by the author, in which the cruelty of bull-baiting is described in very strong terms; and the man who would encourage the practice is represented as a person who would not hesitate to sheathe a blade in the bowels of his fellow-creatures. That the practice of sports, even when they were of a cruel kind, tended to render mankind cruel, he denied, and he founded his assertion on the history of all ages and countries. The most elegant scholars, and the finest poets in ancient and modern times, from Xenophon to Virgil and Milton, were loud in the praises of many of those sports which, with equal justice, might be called cruel, as that which had been so loudly condemned. What was the inference he drew from all this, but that cruelty was not at all the object of those sports, though in certain instances it might be the result? If he were asked, what was the object of bull-baiting, he should be better able to give an intelligible answer, than if he were asked a similar question with regard to hunting, or other amusements of that description. That a certain degree of gratification might be received from the spectacle of the combats of animals, the history

of, all ages sufficiently proved. Even the philosophy of the present age took part with a practice which had prevailed in this country for centuries. In the time of Queen Elizabeth, that which is now despised and reprobated as the amusement only of the lowest of the people, was an amusement courted by all ranks. Since that period bull-baiting had declined, and hunting had usurped its room. The one had become the favourite amusement of the great, and the other had sunk in dignity till it was in a great measure annihilated; and yet it was at such a moment as this, that the house was called upon to put it down by a legislative enactment. Was this, he asked, a time to abridge the amusements of the common people, when we were meditating the extension of the Game Laws to Ireland?

But the riots and confusion which the practice of bull-baiting occasioned were urged as another reason for the necessity of the interference of the legislature. This was a favourite argument on a former occasion, when the subject was before the house, with an Honourable Friend of his (Mr. Wilberforce), Member for Yorkshire. In this instance the conduct of his Honourable Friend put him in mind of the story of the butcher, who ran about seeking his knife while it was in his teeth; for he was searching every quarter in quest of objects of reform, while those in his own neighbourhood were totally overlooked! When he condemned the excesses to which bull-baiting gave rise, had he forgotten all the confusion and riot which horse-racing produced? He himself did not object to the practice of horse-racing, since there were so many individuals to whom it was a source of pleasure. But he might be allowed to remind the house of the observation of Dr. Johnson, who had expressed his surprise at the paucity of human pleasures, when horse-racing constituted one of their number. Perhaps the anxiety displayed by many persons in the pursuit of this pleasure, might be considered as approximating to the efforts of the degenerate Emperors of Rome, to gratify a palate which luxury had rendered insensible to the ordinary materials of food. To horse-racing he was himself personally no more an enemy than he was to boxing—though in making this observation he was far from meaning to disparage boxing so far, as to put them on an equal footing, or to insinuate that so poor, mean, and wretched an amusement as the one, was at all to vie in importance with the other, which was connected with ideas of personal merit, and individual dignity. But he was confident, that in point of effect on the morals of the people, the influence of horse-racing was infinitely more pernicious than any which bull-baiting could produce. What, he desired the house to consider, did a horse-race consist of? What was the description of persons whom it encouraged to assemble? They consisted of all the riff-

raff from every part of the country. There were to be seen collected all the black-legs of the metropolis, the markers at billiard-tables, apprentices who had embezzled the property of their masters, and who are afterwards obliged to resort to knavery to cover their fraud, gingerbread venders, strolling gamblers, in a word, infamous characters of every denomination. Such was the description of individuals whom horse-racing assembled. Now what was the object which such an amusement had in view? He confessed himself unable to view it in any other light than as a species of gambling. It did not seem to him to give exercise for one generous feeling. His Honourable Friend had however taken a cumbrous leap over no less than nine racing-grounds in the county which he represented, and had never descended till he had alighted at a bull-bait. He had totally neglected the duty of destroying abuses at home, but had spent all his labour, and exerted all his zeal, in poaching in foreign manors. So much, he remarked, on the argument that bull-baiting was productive of riot and confusion.

He next recurred to the inexpediency of abridging the amusements of the lower orders at the present moment. There was a very numerous class of pleasures from which their circumstances in life excluded them. To the pleasures of intellect, that source of the purest delights of humanity, their situation denied them access. To the accommodations of social life, so far as a change of situation and place was concerned, they were strangers. The rich had their feasts, their assemblies, their parties of pleasure, their pic nics, every thing, in short, which could afford them gratification. From amusements of this kind the lower orders were excluded by their poverty. But there was another class of pleasures from which they were in a great measure excluded by the rigour of the law. The authority of the magistrate was often interposed to counteract even their harmless pleasures. To dance at all out of season, was to draw on their heads the rigour of unrelenting justice. The great might gratify themselves in a thousand different ways, and the magistrate did not conceive it within his sphere to interrupt their amusements. But it was known that an organ did not sound more harshly in the ears of a Puritan, than did the notes of a fiddle in those of a magistrate, when he himself was not to be of the party. He made an allusion to a beautiful passage of a celebrated writer (Sterne), in which he describes the condition of the lower orders at the close of the day, when labour was finished, when families met together to join in social pleasures, when the old encouraged the sports of the young, and rejoiced in the amusements of their children. But what was all this when translated into plain English? It conveyed to us merely the idea of a hop. In confirmation of his ideas about

the restraints to which the amusements of the lower orders are subjected, he referred to certain transactions which took place in a square at the west end of the town (Berkeley-square) a few years ago. The whole neighbourhood had been alarmed; the most serious apprehensions were excited; the aid of the military was judged necessary; and after all this idle pomp and authority, it was discovered that the formidable disturbers of the public peace were a few domestics dancing to the music of a blind sailor's fiddle. It was to be regretted that many Gentlemen should be anxious to deprive the lower orders of their amusements, from a seeming apprehension, that if they were suffered to enjoy those recreations they would not labour sufficiently, and might become, from their improvidence, a burthen to the poor rates, to which the rich must contribute; this was a most injudicious system of thinking, and he cautioned the rich against acting upon it. The efficient part of the community for labour ought to be encouraged in their exertions rather by furnishing them with occasional amusements, than by depriving them of one, as this bill proposed—a bill, the supporters of which would take them to the Tabernacle or to Jacobinism—for, if to poverty were to be added a privation of amusements, he knew nothing that could operate more strongly to goad the mind into desperation, and to prepare the poor for that dangerous enthusiasm which is analogous to Jacobinism.

He objected to the way in which Gentlemen would wish the house to look at the consequences of bull-baiting, by citing particular accidents, and from them concluding that the practice was cruel, and that the bull in baiting was treated with cruelty; he believed the bull felt a satisfaction in the contest, not less so than the hound did when he heard the sound of the horn which summoned him to the chase. True it was, that young bulls, or those which were never baited before, showed reluctance to be tied to the stake; but those bulls, which according to the language of the sport were called *game bulls*, who were used to baiting, approached the stake and stood there while preparing for the contest with the utmost composure. If the bull felt no pleasure, and was cruelly dealt with, surely the dogs had also some claim to compassion; but the fact was, that both seemed equally arduous in the conflict; and the bull, like every other animal, while it had the better side, did not dislike his situation—it would be ridiculous to say he felt no pain—yet, when on such occasions he exhibited no sign of terror, it was a demonstrable proof that he felt some pleasure.

With regard to the petition from Stamford against this bill, it was entitled to the most respectful attention, for it came from a body of sober loyal men, who attended to their several vocations, and never meddled with politics, faithful to their landlord (the Marquis of Exeter), with whom, however, they could not avoid

being a little displeased for his endeavours to deprive them of their favourite sport by supporting this bill. Those petitioners state, that this amusement had been enjoyed by their town, for a period of five or six hundred years, and the antiquity of the thing was deserving of respect—for respect for antiquity was the best preservation of the Church and State—it was by connecting the past with the present, and the present with the future, that genuine patriotism was produced and preserved.

He repeated that he was shocked and scandalized at the manner in which the advocates of this bill would persuade the house to act; to prohibit an old amusement because it was the amusement of the poor; for the objection was not to the *cruelty* of the amusement; if it were, the scope of the bill ought to be enlarged. Those Gentlemen seemed to be influenced by a species of philosophy dictated by their wives, one of whom might be supposed to address her husband thus:—"My dear, do you know, that after you went out with your dogs this morning, I walked into the village, and was shocked to see a set of wretches at a bull-baiting, tormenting the poor animal. I wish, dear, you would speak to our Member, and request him to bring a bill into Parliament to prevent that horrid practice."—(A laugh).

Independent of the injustice of encroaching upon the few small amusements of the poor, he would beg the house to consider the consequence of rendering them discontented or dispirited, by leaving nothing for them but the wide waste of labour. The reason why our labourers were capable of more work than slaves, was obvious; because they felt that they worked for themselves; and, according as their profit, or their prospect of pleasure, which was the same thing, was increased, just so did their labour generally increase also. Such a bill as this, to abridge men's pleasures, and to hold out a kind of direct hint to them that they never could labour enough, was sufficient to Jacobinize a whole country. In proof of the assertion that bull-baiting did not operate to brutalize men's minds, he had only to turn the attention of the house to Lancashire and Staffordshire, where that practice principally prevailed. These counties were known to produce the best soldiers in the army, and the militia of Staffordshire were known to have been selected, from their good behaviour, to do duty about the Royal Person; a pretty good proof that bull-baiting did not produce such effects on the morals of the people as the Puritans affected to deplore, but rather such as the Jacobins in France and England very sincerely lamented. It was mockery in men to talk of the suffering of animals from the sports of the lower orders, while they themselves were doing something worse. To the difference between the jolly bull-baiting peasant and his demure gloomy censors, he would apply the words of the poet—

"Tom struts a soldier, open, bold, and brave;
Will sneaks a scrivener, an exceeding knave."

The Right Honourable Gentleman concluded with stating, that if the bill before the house should be adopted, he should, for the sake of consistency and the character of parliament, conceive it his duty to move for leave to bring in a bill to prohibit hunting, shooting, fishing, and all the sports of the field practised by the higher orders.

The Bill was supported by Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. W. Smith, and Mr. Sheridan; and opposed by Colonel Grosvenor, General Gascoyne, and Mr. Frankland.

The question being put, "That the Bill be now read a second time," General Gascoyne rose, and moved as an Amendment, "That it be read a second time this day three months." On which Amendment the house divided:

Ayes	64
Noes	51

Majority against the bill	13
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The Bill was consequently lost.

MONASTIC INSTITUTION BILL.

JUNE 23, 1800.

THE order of the day being read on a Bill for placing under certain regulations the Monastic Institutions in this kingdom,

MR. WINDHAM spoke to the following effect:

Sir,

DID any necessity exist for a restraining measure of this kind, I know none more unexceptionable than the present one proposed. But with all the inquiries I have been able to make, and with all the sagacity I have been able to exercise, though I have even strained my eyes to find out a plausible or sufficient cause for the present proceeding, I have been wholly disappointed in my object. Instead of the Roman Catholic Religion springing up again into importance, its friends have to fear a change of quite a different kind. I, myself, have, upon some occasions, been considered as a pretty good alarmist, though on the present one my feelings, I confess, are rather obtuse. Whether or no my fears for the common safety of Europe may absorb all other considerations of danger, or that I see things in a juster point of light than those who support the Bill, I will not pretend to say.—What, however, can be more absurd, than to suppose that in the present order of things, in this era of the world, at the latter end of the eighteenth century, (or, if you please, at the beginning of the nineteenth,) in the tenth year of the French revolution, in the general renunciation of every popish tenet throughout Europe, when the fate even of that quarter of the globe is trembling in the balance, and the period is arrived which must either establish or overturn for ever the power of France, any just apprehension can be entertained of the spread and dominion of popery? Some Gentlemen there are, of heated imaginations, who attribute all the calamities, which have lately arisen, to the effects and operation of popery. Popery, they say, produced the D'Alemberts, the Diderots, and the Voltaires, who, in their turn, contributed to its downfall; and even our countrymen Hume and Gibbon were made-infidels by the horrors of popery. The opinions of such persons, then, it seems, have produced these calamities; and in the time of these calamities, the re-production of those opinions which originally gave birth to them is become matter of serious dread and expectation. Those who reason in this way make use of an admirable antiperistasis. Qualities are said sometimes to produce

their opposites; thus heat produces cold. On this principle, indeed, the effects of infidelity, with all its concurrent circumstances, may be to produce religion. But, on taking a survey of Europe, I cannot see any imminent danger of this sort.

But what is the danger spoken of? Why, there are three or four thousand emigrant priests in the country. I admit, this argument, taken by itself, is a good one; but Gentlemen ought to look further. In the time of Agricola, the northern inhabitants of this island were held in disregard, and did not much invite the Roman arms. From this, they supposed they were braver than their southern neighbours, who were conquered by the Romans.—To apply this to the present occasion, I would say, we see four or five thousand popish priests in this country. These are the wreck of three hundred thousand who once flourished in France, but were suppressed. A few stragglers only have come to us, who happily survived the destruction of the Gallic church. This general overthrow and abasement have weakened more the Catholic faith, than any endeavours of the remaining few who adhere to it can effect towards its restoration. They have no idea of the kind. They esteem themselves weak and fallen. The supporters of the present bill only swell them into importance, and suppose them capable of performing a task their more numerous brethren were unequal to. Those who have fled to us for protection, are but miserable remains as to their means and power, though not as to the virtues they have uniformly displayed. What danger then can be suspected from them? Where the means are so disproportionate, why should we fear the end? I must consider, therefore, this bill as wholly useless. Where no danger exists, no precaution is necessary—where no disease, no remedy. When I think of the readiness with which persons are apt to call for the interference of the house, I consider it as one of the evils of the times. The courts below keep up their price—there we find no frivolous applications; the experiment is too costly—parliament only is cheap. The legislature is as accessible as the parish pump: it may be worked by the first man who chooses to put his hand to it.

This alone is a sufficient reason why the vote of the house should put a stop to the further progress of the bill. If, however, we are to go on with it, let us consider what other objections there may be. The form of an argument has been adduced in its support,

“If form indeed it had, which form had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,”

that these miserable remains of the church of France will revive the monkish superstitions.—But how can this be the case; or, if

it was, what mischiefs could ensue? What is there so abhorrent in a convent; or, what danger is to be apprehended from one sect more than another? I do not mean to go into the question of monastic institutions, or to undertake their defence; but I will say, that nothing can be more weak, indecent, or offensive, than the arguments generally adduced against them. Why any person who voluntarily consigns himself to mortifying penalties and solitude should be condemned and restrained in the free exercise of his wishes, I know not: piety, to be sure, may not require the many privations he lays himself under; but let him either be an ascetic or a maniac, it is no concern of mine. The effect of his conduct is confined to himself, and is the concern of no other person. In no one instance has the hostility of protestant divines been more displayed than against the ascetics of the church of Rome. Man, by his nature, perhaps, is more apt to find fault with and condemn those excessive virtues which put him to the blush, than the blackest and most extravagant vices. Every man is the rule of his own conduct. One disposition may require more mortification than another, and the stronger should possess charity for the weaker brother. Some may be driven

"To leave a world where strong temptations lie,
And when they cannot conquer, learn to fly."

I should be glad to know why a society of ancient maids, who may unite together, and agree not to go beyond their garden walls, are less respectable or less virtuous than the same number of ladies dispersed abroad, who collect parties at whist, or at any other amusement.

It is a matter worthy of consideration what researches have been carried on in monasteries, what inventions thence take their origin, and what voyages missionaries from that school have performed. This circumstance makes us respect the inhabitants of cloisters and their institutions. The hope of a convent has been the support of many. It is a last retreat, where they shun the cares and misfortunes of life. In this country, however, such an institution is graced with no veneration; its devotees are not marked with any peculiar degree of sanctity. One great cause, therefore, of forsaking the world by seclusion in these places, is wanting in this country. When the church of Rome was in the plenitude of its power, the proselytes to its tenets were numerous, and its doctrines thus brought into exercise might be attended with some danger in this country. Now, however, when the predominance of another persuasion exists, and in the degraded state of the Catholic church besides, a papist is no more an object of fear or suspicion than any other sectary. Toleration demands that a state should be indifferent to all religious opinions which

do not affect its own internal tranquillity or safety. A state, I own, has a right to patronize what establishment it pleases, but not to suppress the freedom of opinion or dissent. Some opinions, it is true, are dangerous, and these a state should not be indifferent to. Such were the opinions of the United Irishmen. But if a set of nuns choose to make vows of celibacy, it is voluntary on their part, and no restraint should be imposed upon them. If, therefore, without any danger from popery, you attempt to lay its professors under needless restrictions, you legislate on very delicate grounds. It is right to save one man from the act of another, but not to save him from the act of himself. According to the best information I have received, I do not believe that the interior of a convent is that scene of vice or woe which it has most commonly been represented to be; and if persons choose to spend their lives within such walls, the legislature have no right to rescue them from their own determinations.

By this bill persons are to be prevented from making vows; but there is no instance, I believe, of a woman in an English convent who has not passed her novitiate in another country. But, to go back to the subject of convents, I say that the law should not interfere to prevent converts to popery, any more than to any other sects and persuasions. If, indeed, conversion to popery were an evil, law is not its proper remedy. The divines of the established church should feed their flocks with spiritual food, and thus enable them to withstand the poison of delusion. Instead of this, they are too fond of raising the cry, "the church is in danger!" If proselytism exists, it is a disgrace only to that clergyman in whose parish it takes place. What, if they do their duty, can members of the church of England fear? They meet their antagonists on more than equal terms. Should any one indeed attempt to preach up the rights of man, or teach insubordination to lawful authority; to silence such would then be a work of necessity: but popery has nothing in it of this dangerous tendency, and may be met fairly in the field of argument. But if a line of conduct be adopted similar to that which induces persons to apply to the legislature to protect themselves by penalties and statutes, where they are entirely careless about themselves, and would rather defend their property by acts of parliament than by a quickset hedge; what can persons thus acting expect, but that advantage should be taken of their supineness? Success, and the protection of the laws, belong rightly to a different class, *Vigilantibus non dormientibus*. Penal laws can never defend the country against popery. I cannot help making the remark here, that opinion may be too much under the protection of law. A little opposition is no bad thing: it makes persons attentive to their duty, and may be as useful in the church as in the senate. In the

physical and moral body, opposition tends to keep up the proper tone of health. Did the earth spontaneously produce every thing for the use of man, the short-sighted philosopher might say it was well; but nature has wisely ordained it otherwise. Every thing valuable is to be acquired and preserved by labour. In this point of view I should deprecate the bill Gentlemen wish to bring in, as it tends to narrow the field of intellectual exercise and fair discussion.

Another objection against the bill is, that it raises prejudices in the minds of the illiberal, against a number of unoffending persons, who have fled to our shores from the tempest which threatened their destruction.—When this shall subside, they will be very ready to seek their own country again, and carry all their offensive customs and sentiments along with them. But why should we send them back lame and crippled? While they remain here, it is not generous to mark them out as objects of public scorn and suspicion. An Honourable Gentleman opposite (Mr. T. Jones) has called this a nun-baiting bill. I, however, am their defender; and the bull himself turned into a baiter, is running furiously among the nuns. As to danger to the state, every person must scout the idea. If conversion be the evil complained of, why is that greater in this case than in that of the sectaries? I have heard it as an argument for the bill, that if it will do no great good, it will do no hurt: but this I deny, so long as unjust prejudice is liable to spring from it. I therefore vote against the Speaker's leaving the chair.

Sir Henry Mildmay (with whom the Bill had originated), Mr. T. Jones, Mr. Dudley Ryder, Mr. Erskine, and Mr. Perceval, supported the Bill; Mr. Hobhouse, Sir William Scott, Mr. Sheridan, and Dr. Lawrence opposed it. On a division, the numbers were,

For the Speaker's leaving the Chair	52
Against it.	24
Majority	28

The Bill, with some modifications, passed the House of Commons, but was rejected by the House of Lords.

PEACE OF AMIENS.

NOVEMBER 4th, 1801.

On the preceding evening, the following address had been moved by Sir Edmund Hartopp, was seconded by Mr. Lee (M. P. for Dungarvan), and passed the House of Commons without a division, viz.

"That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, thanking His Majesty for being graciously pleased to order the preliminaries of peace with France to be laid before this House;—to assure His Majesty of the just sense this House entertains of this fresh instance of his paternal care for the welfare and happiness of his people;—and to express their firm reliance that the final ratification of those preliminaries will be highly advantageous to the interests, and honourable to the character of the British Nation."

In the course of the debate, the terms of the peace had been censured by Mr. T. Grenville, Lord Temple, and Dr. Lawrence, and defended by Lord Hawkesbury, Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Banks, Mr. Pitt, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Addington. Mr. Fox also expressed his satisfaction that a peace had been effected. Mr. WINDHAM being unwell, reserved himself for the evening of the 4th, when, on the report of the address being brought up, he addressed the chair in the following speech:

Sir,

In the present stage of this business, and in a house so little numerous, I am not disposed to take up the subject in the way in which I should have wished to consider it, had I been able with tolerable satisfaction to myself, to deliver my sentiments in the debate of last night. Something, however, I wish to say, founded in a great measure on what then took place,

All that I heard, and all that I saw, on that occasion, tends only to confirm more and more the deep despair in which I am plunged, in contemplating the probable consequences of the present Treaty.

Notwithstanding some lofty talk which we heard of dignity and firmness, and which I shall be glad to see realized, and a happy quotation, expressive of the same sentiments, from my Honourable Friend not now present (Mr. Pitt), the real amount of what was said, seems to be little more than this:—that France has, to be sure, the *power* of destroying us, but that we hope she will not have the *inclination*;—that we are under the paw of the lion, but that he may happen not to be hungry, and, instead of making a meal of us, may turn round in his den, and go to sleep.

—This is not stated in so many words: but it will be difficult to show, that it is not the fair result of the arguments.

That I should have lived to see the day, when such arguments could be used in a British House of Commons!—that I should have lived to see a House of Commons, where such arguments could be heard with patience, and even with complacency!—The substance of the statement is this. We make Peace, not from any necessity actually existing, (my Honourable Friends, with great propriety, reject that supposition,) but because we foresee a period, at no great distance, when such a necessity must arise; and we think it right, that provision for such a case should be made in time.—We treat, or, to take at once the more appropriate term, we capitulate, while we have yet some ammunition left. General Menou could do no more. General Menou could do no more in one sense; but in another he did, I fear, a great deal more:—a point to which I must say a word hereafter;—he did not abandon to their fate those whom he had invited to follow his fortunes, and to look up to him as their protector. Both, however, capitulated; and upon the plain and ordinary grounds of such a proceeding, namely, that their means of resistance must soon come to an end, and that they had no such hopes of any fortunate turn in their favour, as to justify a continuance of their resistance in the mean time. The conduct of both, in the circumstances supposed, was perfectly rational: but let us recollect, that those who stand in such circumstances, be they generals or be they nations, are, to all intents and purposes, *conquered*! I know not what other definition we want of being conquered, than that a country can say to us, “we can hold out, and you cannot; make Peace, or we will ruin you:” and that you, in consequence, make Peace, upon terms which must render a renewal of hostilities, under any provocation, more certainly fatal than a continuation of that War, which you already declare yourselves unable to bear.

If such be the fact, we may amuse ourselves with talking what language we please; but we are a *conquered people*. Buonaparte is as much our master, as he is of Spain or Prussia, or any other of those countries, which, though still permitted to call themselves independent, are, as every body knows, as completely in his power, as if the name of *department* was already written upon their foreheads.—There are but two questions,—Is the relation between the countries such, that France can ruin us by continuing the War? and will that relation in substance remain the same, or rather will it not be rendered infinitely worse, by Peace, upon the terms now proposed?—If both these questions are answered in the affirmative, the whole is decided, and we live henceforward by sufferance from France.

Sir, before we endeavour to estimate our prospects in this new and honourable state of existence, I wish to consider for a moment, what the reasonings are, that have determined our choice, as to the particular mode of it; and why we think that ruin by War must be so much more speedy and certain, than ruin by Peace. And here I will take pretty much the statement given by the Honourable Gentlemen who argue on the other side.

I agree, that the question is not, whether this Peace be good or bad, honourable or dishonourable, adequate or inadequate; whether it places us in a situation better or worse, than we had reason to expect, or than we were in before the War. All these are parts of the question, and many of them very material parts; but the question itself is, whether the Peace now proposed, such as it is, be better, or not, than a continuation of hostilities?—Whether, according to a familiar mode of speech, we may not go farther and fare worse?—Whether, to take the same form in a manner somewhat more developed and correct, the chances of faring better, compared with the chances of faring worse, and including the certainty of intermediate evils, do not render it advisable, upon the whole, that we should rest contented where we are.

This I take to be the statement of the question, on the present, and on all similar occasions: nor do I know of any addition necessary to be made, except to observe, that in estimating the terms of Peace in the manner here proposed, you are not merely to consider the physical force, or pecuniary value, of the objects concerned; but also the effect which Peace, made in such and such circumstances, is likely to have on the character and estimation of the country; a species of possession, which, though neither tangible nor visible, is as much a part of national strength, and has as real a value, as any thing that can be turned into pounds and shillings, that can be sold by the score or hundred, or weighed out in avoirdupoise. Accordingly a statesman, acting for a great country, may very well be in the situation of saying,—I would make Peace at this time, if nothing more were in question, than the value of the objects now offered me, compared with those which I may hope to obtain; but when I consider what the effect is, which Peace, made in the present circumstances, will have upon the estimation of the country; what the weakness is which it will betray; what the suspicions it will excite; what the distrust and alienation it will produce, in the minds of all the surrounding nations; how it will lower us in their eyes; how it will teach them universally to fly from connexion with a country, which neither protects its friends, nor seems any longer capable of protecting itself, in order to turn to those, who, while their vengeance is terrible, will not suffer a hair of the head to be touched, of any who will put themselves under their protection;—

when I consider these consequences, not less real or permanent, or extensive, than those which present themselves in the shape of territorial strength or commercial resources, I must reject these terms, which otherwise I should feel disposed to accept, and say, that, putting character into the scale, the inclination of the balance is decidedly the other way.

Sir, there is in all this nothing new or refined, or more than will be admitted by every one in words; though there seems so little disposition to adhere to it in fact.—If we refer to the practice of only our own time, what was the case of the Falkland Islands and Nootka? Was it the value of these objects, that we were going to War for? The one was a barren rock, an object of competition for nothing but seals and seagulls; the other a point of land in a wilderness, where some obscure, though spirited, adventurers had hoped that they might in time establish a trade with the savages for furs. Were these, objects to involve nations in Wars? If there was a question of their doing so, it was because considerations of a far different kind were attached to them,—considerations of national honour and dignity; between which and the objects themselves, there may often be no more proportion, than between the picture of a great master, and the canvas on which it is painted.

If I wished for authorities upon such a subject, I need go no further than to the Honourable Gentleman, [Mr. Fox,] who has recurred to a sentiment, produced by him formerly with something of paradoxical exaggeration, (though true in the main,) namely, that Wars for points of honour, are really the only rational and prudent Wars in which a country can engage. Much of the same sort is the sentiment of another popular teacher, JUNIUS, who, upon the subject of these very Falkland Islands, says, in terms which it may be worth while to quote, not for the merit of the language, nor the authority of the writer,—though neither of them without their value,—but to show, what were once the feelings of Englishmen, and what the topics chosen by a writer, whose object it was to recommend himself to the people: “To depart, in the minutest article, from the nicety and strictness of punctilio, is as dangerous to national honour, as it is to female virtue. The woman who admits of one familiarity, seldom knows where to stop, or what to refuse; and when the counsels of a great country give way in a single instance, when they are once inclined to submission, every step accelerates the rapidity of their descent!”

We are not therefore, according to the present fashion, to fall to calculating, and to ask ourselves, what is the value at market of such and such an object, and how much it will cost us to obtain it. If these objects alone were at stake, I should admit the

principle in its full force; and should be among the first to declare, that no object of mere pecuniary value could ever be worth obtaining at the price of a War: but when particular points of honour are at stake, as at Nootka or the Falkland Islands, (without inquiring, whether in those cases the point of honour was either well chosen, or rightly estimated;) and still more, where general impression, where universal estimation, where the conception to be formed of the feelings, temper, power, policy, and views of a great nation are in question, there to talk of calculating the loss or profit of possessions to which these considerations may be attached, by their price at market, or the value of their fee-simple, is like the idea of Dr. Swift, when he is comparing the grants to the Duke of Marlborough, with the rewards of a Roman conqueror, and estimates the crown of laurel at two-pence.

The first question for a great country to ask itself,—the first in point of order, and the first in consequence,—is this: Is the part which I am about to act consonant to that high estimation which I have hitherto maintained among the nations of the world? Will my reputation suffer?—whether that reputation relate to the supposed extent of its means, to the vigour and wisdom of its councils, or to the uprightness of its intentions. If, in any of these ways, the country is to sustain a loss of character; if the effect of what is proposed be to render it less respected, less looked up to, less trusted, less feared; if its firmness in times of trial, its fidelity to its engagements, its steady adherence to its purposes through all fortunes, are to be called in question; it must be a strong necessity indeed, stronger than any which I believe to exist in the present instance, that ought to induce it even to listen to counsels liable to be attended with any of these consequences. It must be a weighty danger, that, in the scales of a great country, can be allowed to balance the loss of any part of its dignity. What then shall we say of a country, which, abandoning from the outset every consideration of this sort, will not wait till it becomes insecure by ceasing to be respectable, but becomes unrespectable by ceasing to be secure? Which drops at once at the feet of its rival? Which begins by a complete surrender of its security; and suffers fame, character, dignity, and every thing else, to go along with it?

Whether such is the situation of this country, we shall judge better by taking a short view of the terms of the proposed Peace. The description of these is simple and easy:—France gives nothing, and, excepting Trinidad and Ceylon, England gives every thing. If it were of any consequence to state what in diplomatic language was the basis of this treaty, we must say, that it had no *one* basis; but that it was the *status quo*, on the part of England, with the two exceptions in its favour, of Ceylon

and Trinidad; and the *uti possidetis*, with the addition of all the other English conquests, on the part of France. But what may be the technical description of the treaty, is, comparatively, of little importance. It is the result that is material, and the extent of power and territory, now, by whatever means, actually remaining in the hands of France. The enumeration of this, liable indeed in part to be disputed, but upon the whole sufficiently correct, may be made as follows:

In Europe,—France possesses the whole of the Continent, with the exception of Russia and Austria. If it be said, that parts of Germany, and the Northern courts of Denmark and Sweden, are not fairly described as being immediately under the control of France, we must balance this consideration by remarking, the influence which France possesses in these governments, and the commanding position which she occupies with respect to Austria, by the possession of Switzerland and Mantua, and those countries which have been considered always, and twice in the course of the present War, have proved to be, the direct inlet into the heart of her dominions.

In Asia,—Pondichery, Mahé, Cochin, Negapatam, the Spice Islands.

In Africa,—the Cape of Good Hope, Goree, Senegal.

In the sea that is enclosed by these three continents, which connects them all, and furnishes to us, in many respects, our best and surest communication with them,—the Mediterranean,—every port and post except Gibraltar, from one end of it to the other, including the impregnable and invaluable port of Malta; so as to exclude us from a sea, which it had ever before been the anxious policy of Great Britain to keep in her hands,—and to render it now, truly and properly, what it was once idly called, the Sea of France.

In the West-Indies,—St. Domingo, both the French and Spanish parts, Martinico, St. Lucie, Guadaloupe, Tobago, Curacoa.

In North America,—St. Pierre and Miquelon, with a right to the fisheries in the fullest extent to which they were ever claimed; Louisiana, (so it is supposed,) a word dreadful to be pronounced, to all who consider the consequences with which that cession is pregnant, whether as it acts northward, by its effects upon the United States, or southward, as opening a direct passage into the Spanish settlements in America.

In South America,—Surinam, Demerara, Berbice, Essequibo, taken by us and now ceded;—Guiana, and by the effect of the Treaty, fraudulently signed by France with Portugal, just before the signature of these Preliminaries, a tract of country extending to the river Amazon, and giving to France the command of the entrance into that river. Whether, by any secret article, the evils

of this cession will prove to have been done away, time will discover. In fact, (be that as it may,) France may be said to possess the whole of the Spanish and Portuguese settlements upon that Continent. For who shall say, that she has not the command of those settlements, when she has the command of the countries to which they belong;—*cum custodit ipsos custodes?* She has, in truth, whatever part of the Continent of South America she chooses to occupy; and as far as relates to the Spanish part, without even the necessity, a necessity that probably would not cost her much, of infringing any part of the present treaty.

Such is the grand and comprehensive circle to which the New Roman Empire may be soon expected to spread, now that Peace has removed all obstacles, and opened to her a safe and easy passage into the three remaining quarters of the globe. Such is the power which we are required to contemplate without dismay! under the shade of whose greatness we are invited to lie down with perfect tranquillity and composure! I should be glad to know what our ancestors would have thought and felt in this situation! what those weak and deluded men, so inferior to the politicians of the present day, the Marlboroughs, the Godolphins, the Somerses, the King Williams, all those who viewed with such apprehension the power of Louis XIV.; what they would say to a Peace, which not only confirms to France the possession of nearly the whole of Europe, but extends her empire over every other part of the globe. Is there a man of them, who would not turn in his coffin, could he be sensible to a twentieth part of that which is passing, as perfect matter of course, in the politics of the present moment?

But to all these mighty dangers we have, it seems, one great security to oppose; not that degrading and bastard security to which I have before adverted, and to which, I fear, I must again recur,—that France is *lassata* if not *satiata*; that having run down her prey, she will be content to spare it, and be willing for awhile to leave us unmolested;—but a rational, sober, well-founded security, applicable to the supposition that she may not be wanting in the will to hurt us, but will happily not possess the power. This great security, we are told, is our wealth. We are, it seems, so immensely rich, our prosperity stands on so sure and wide a basis, we have such a pyramid of gold, so beautifully constructed, and so firmly put together, that we may safely let in all the world to do their worst against it; they can never overturn it, and might spend ages in endeavouring to take it to pieces. We seem to consider our commercial prosperity, like those articles of property, timber, marble, and others of that sort, which, however valuable, may be safely left unguarded, being too weighty and bulky to be carried away.

Sir, the first circumstance that strikes one in this statement, is, that odd inconsistency, by which a country that makes Peace on account of its poverty, is to rest its whole hope of security in that Peace, upon its wealth. If our wealth will protect us, it is a great pity that this discovery was not made long ago; it would have saved us many years of painful struggle; have kept in our hands a great additional portion of these very means of protection; and have lessened considerably the dangers against which such protection is wanted. But wealth, I fear, abstracted from certain means of using it, carries with it no powers of protection, either for itself or others. Riches are strength, in the same manner only as they are food. They may be the means of procuring both. But we shall fall into as great a folly, as in the fable of Midas, if we suppose that when we have laid down our arms, and surrendered our fortresses, our wealth, alone, can afford us any protection. I cannot, therefore, for my own part, understand what is meant by this, unless it be, that by superiority of capital, and priority of market, of which I allow the effects to be immense, we might, if things were left to themselves, in a fair competition, in a fair race, still keep ahead of our competitors, in spite of all the multiplied advantages which France will now possess. This might be so; though it is by no means clear that it would. But the competition will not be left to its natural course. This game will not be fairly played. Buonaparte is a player, who, if the game is going against him, will be apt to pick a quarrel, and ask us if we can draw our swords.—And here, perhaps, it is time to remark the singular fallacy, which has run through all the reasonings of Gentlemen on the other side; that, namely, of supposing that in discussing the present question, the Peace, such as it is, is the state which is to be contrasted with the continuance of the War;—they forget, or choose that we should forget, that this Peace may, at any moment, at the mere pleasure of the enemy, be converted into a new War; differing only from the other, by the ground which we in the meanwhile shall have lost, and the numerous advantages which the enemy will have acquired. There is not the least reason why this Treaty, if the enemy should so please, should be any thing more than a mere piece of legerdemain, by which they shall have got possession of Malta, have established themselves in all their new colonies, have perhaps re-entered Egypt, have received back twenty or thirty thousand seamen, and have otherwise put themselves into a situation to recommence the War, with new and decisive advantages. If they do not immediately take this course, it will be, simply, because they will hope to succeed as well without it; or, because they choose to defer it till a more convenient opportunity: the means will, at every moment, be in their power.

Two suppositions are, therefore, always to be made, and two comparisons to be instituted, when we talk of the merits of this Peace: 1st. That the enemy will choose to adhere to it, or, 2dly, that they will break it: and the two comparisons to be formed in consequence are, 1st, The comparison between a continuation of the War and a state of Peace, such as Peace will be under the present Treaty; and 2dly, a comparison of the War, so continued, with such a War as France may revive at any moment after the present Treaty shall have taken effect.

What the condition and feelings of the country would be, in this latter case, namely that of a renewed War, I need hardly point out. The dread in fact of what they would be, will operate so strongly, that the case will never happen. The country will never bear to put itself in a situation, in which the sense of its own folly will press upon it in a way so impossible to be endured. At all events, with its present feelings and opinions, the country never *can* go to war again, let France do what she will: for, if we are of opinion, that War, continued at present, must be ruin in the course of a few years, what do we suppose it must be, when, to replace us where we now are, we must begin by the recovery of that list of places, which the present treaty has given up? France, therefore, will be under no necessity of going to War with us; and nothing but her own intemperance and insolence, and an opinion of our endurance and weakness, beyond even what they may be found to deserve, can force upon us that extremity. She has much surer and safer means of going to work, means, at the same time, sufficiently quick in their operation to satisfy any ordinary ambition:—she has nothing to do but to trust to the progress of her own power in Peace, quickened, as often as she shall see occasion, by a smart threat of War. I cannot conceive the object, which a judicious application of these two means is not calculated to obtain. A Peace, such as France has now made, mixed with proper proportions of a seasonable menace of war, is a specific, for the undoing of a rival country, which seems to me impossible to fail.—Let us try it in detail.—Suppose France, by an arrangement with that *independent* power, Spain, similar to the arrangement which, in violation of the treaty of Utrecht, produced the surrender of Louisiana and of the Spanish half of St. Domingo, should obtain the cession (which would be in violation of no treaty) of all the Spanish settlements in America: would you consider that as an occasion of war? Suppose Portugal, the integrity of whose possessions is in some sense or other guaranteed to her, but who is not prevented, I presume, by that guarantee from parting with any of them that she pleases, should choose, in kindness to France, to make over to her any of those settlements which she, Portugal, still retains,—would that, again,

be a cause of war? By these two ways, without the infraction of any Treaty, which by any act could be construed to be an aggression, much less which we should be inclined to treat as such, might France render herself completely mistress of the Continent of South America. Is there any commercial claim, then, that France could set up, any commercial regulation which she could introduce, either in her own name, or that of her allies, of a nature the most injurious and fatal to our commerce, which we should make a case of resistance, and think of magnitude enough to involve the nation in another war?—The augmentation of her marine, to which professedly she means to direct all her efforts, and the increase of her establishments to any amount that she pleases; these are objects which it would be perfectly ridiculous to talk of, or to suppose that we should make the subject even of the most friendly remonstrance. Indeed, according to the modern doctrines of not interfering in the internal concerns of another country, I do not understand upon what pretence the armament of a state can ever become a subject of representation, since nothing surely is so completely an internal concern, as what any nation does with its own military or naval forces, upon its own soil, or in its own harbours. But setting aside these *smaller* objects, suppose France was to re-invade Egypt; was, without waiting even for the form of a surrender from the Order, to take forcible possession of Malta; was to land a body of troops in Greece, and either in that way, or by succours to Paswan Oglow, was to upset the government of the Porte;—would you be able, on any of these occasions, to satisfy those by whose opinions it is now the fashion to guide the counsels of states, that an interest existed sufficiently strong to call for the interference of this country, to prevent the mischief, much less to redress and vindicate it when done? Why, Sir, we know that in the present state of opinions and feelings, and upon the principles on which the present Peace has been made, not only no one, but hardly all of these put together, would drag the country into a renewal of hostilities, though, as is evident, its very existence might depend upon it. The consequence is, that France is our mistress; that there is nothing she can ask, which she must not have; (she has only to threaten war, and her work is done);—that all the objects of interest and ambition which France can have in view, lie open before her, to be taken possession of whenever she pleases, and without a struggle: her establishments will accumulate round us, till we shall be lost and buried in them; her power will grow over us, till, like the figures in some of Ovid's Metamorphoses, we shall find all our faculties of life and motion gradually failing and deserting us.

— *Torpor gravis alligat artus ;
Mollia cinguntur tenui præcordia libro.*

If, in this last extremity, we should make any desperate efforts and plunges, that might threaten to become troublesome, and give us a chance of extricating ourselves, she will call in the aid of her arms, and with one blow put an end at once to our sufferings, and our existence.

Sir, are these idle dreams, the phantoms of my own disordered imagination? or are they real and serious dangers, the existence of which no man of common sense, let his opinions of the Peace be what they may, will attempt to deny? The utmost that any man will pretend to say, is, that he hopes, (and so do I,) that the evils apprehended will not happen; and that, great as the risk may be, he thinks it preferable to those risks, which would attend a continuation of the War. None but the most weak or inconsiderate, if they are not disaffected, or absorbed and lost in the sense of some immediate personal interest, will feel, when they shall well understand the subject, that there is any cause of joy or rejoicing.

Here it is then, that I must advert again to that topic of consolation, (miserable indeed must our state be, when such are our topics of consolation,) to which, in order to make out a case not perfectly hopeless, we are willing to have recourse, and which, more I believe than any reliance upon our wealth, does really support us, in the situation to which we are reduced. This is the idea, that from some cause or other, from some combination of passions and events,—such as no philosophy can explain, and no history probably furnish an example of,—the progress of the Revolution will stop where it is; and that Buonaparte, like another Pyrrhus,—or rather like that adviser of Pyrrhus, whose advice was *not* taken,—instead of proceeding to the conquest of new worlds, will be willing to sit down contented in the enjoyment of those which he has already.

Sir, the great objection to this hope, to say nothing of its baseness, is its utter extravagance. On what possible ground do we believe this? Is it in the general nature of ambition? Is it in the nature of French ambition? Is it in the nature of French revolutionary ambition? Does it happen commonly to those, whether nations or individuals, who are seized with the spirit of aggrandizement and acquisition, that they are inclined rather to count what they possess, than to look forward to what yet remains to be acquired? If we examine the French Revolution, and trace it correctly to its causes, we shall find that the scheme of universal empire was, from the beginning, that which was looked to as the real consummation of its labours; the object first in view, though

last to be accomplished; the *primum mobile* that originally set it in motion, and has since guided and governed all its movements.

The authors of the Revolution wished to destroy morality and religion. They wished those things as ends: but they wished them also, as means, in a higher and more extensive design. They wished for a double empire; an empire of opinion and an empire of political power: and they used the one of these, as a means of effecting the other. What reason have we to suppose, that they have renounced those designs, just when they seem to touch the moment of their highest and fullest accomplishment? When there is but one country, that remains between France and the empire of the world, then is the moment, when we choose to suppose that all opposition may be withdrawn, and that the ambition of France will stop of its own accord.—It is impossible not to see in these feeble and sickly imaginations, that fatal temper of mind, which leads men to look for help and comfort from any source rather than from their own exertions. We are become of a sudden great *hoppers*. We *hope* the French will have no inclination to hurt us;—we *hope*, now Peace is come, and the pressure of War, as it is called, taken off, that the French Empire will become a prey to dissensions, and finally fall to pieces;—we *hope*, that the danger to have been apprehended from the example of the Revolution, is now worn out; and that Buonaparte, being now monarch himself, will join with us in the support of monarchical principles, and become a sort of collateral security for the British constitution. One has heard, to be sure, that *magni animi est sperare*; but the maxim, to have any truth in it, must be confined, I apprehend, to those hopes which are to be prosecuted through the medium of men's own exertions, and not be extended to those, which are to be independent of their exertions, or rather, as in the present instance, are meant to stand in lieu of them.

Of this description are all those expectations which I have just enumerated; one of which is, that the French will fall into dissensions.—Why, Sir, they have had nothing else but dissensions from the beginning. But of what avail have such dissensions been to the safety of other countries? One of their first dissensions was a war of three years, called the war of La Vendée; in which, according to some of their calculations, the Republic lost, between the two sides, to the number of 600,000 souls. This was surely pretty well, in the way of dissension. Yet when did this interrupt for a moment, even if it might in some degree have relaxed, the operations of their armies on the frontiers, and the prosecution of their plans for the overthrow of other countries? As for changes of government, they have been in a continued course of them. Since the beginning of the Revolution, the government has been overturned at least half a dozen times. They

have turned over in the air, as in sport, like tumbler-pigeons;—but have they ever in consequence ceased their flight? The internal state of the country has been in the most violent commotion. The ship has been in mutiny;—there has been fighting in the waist and on the fore-castle;—but in the midst of the confusion somebody has always been found to tend the helm, and to trim the sails; the vessel has held her course.—For one, therefore, I have no great confidence in the effect of these internal commotions; which every day become less and less likely, in proportion as the power of the present government becomes more confirmed, and as the people of France become more and more bound together by the common feeling of national glory, and by the desire of consolidating the empire which they have seen established. Such commotions may undoubtedly happen, and may of a sudden, when it is least expected, bring about some change that is favourable to the world. But it is curious to hear these chances gravely brought forward, as the best foundation of our hopes, and by those too, who a few weeks ago, while the war continued, would never hear of them, as entering, at all, into calculation. It seems, that the chapter of accidents, as it is called, which could do nothing for us in War, may do every thing for us in time of Peace. Whereas I should have thought just the contrary; that chances, such as are here intended, were not only more likely to happen in war, but, what is a little material, might then be better improved and turned to account. While War subsists, while armies are ready to act, while confederacies are in force, while intelligences are going on, while assistance may be lawfully and avowedly given, every chance of this sort may, if properly improved, lead to consequences the most decisive. In Peace, all that fortune can do for us, falls dead and still-born. Nobody is ready, nobody is authorized to move a step, or stretch forth a hand, to rear and foster those chances, however promising, which time and accident may bring forth. It is not an answer to say, that such never *have* been improved. In regulating plans of future conduct, we must consider not what men have done, but what they may and ought to do. The only rational idea that I could ever form of resistance to that power, which unresisted must subdue the world, was, that it must be the joint effect of an internal and an external war, directed to the same end, and mutually aiding and supporting each other. All the powers of Europe could not subdue France, if France was united; or force upon it a government, even were such an attempt warrantable, really in opposition to the wishes of the people. On the other hand, no internal efforts, unassisted by force from without, seemed capable of rescuing the country from the yoke imposed upon it, so long as the several factions that governed in succession, could find

means of securing to themselves the support of the armies. We are now required to believe, that what has hitherto failed to be performed by both these powers together, is to be effected by one alone: and that with respect to any hope of a change of government in France, the War that has been carrying on for nine years has proved only an impediment!—Such is the state of our hopes and opinions on that side.

But we have another hope, founded on rather a contrary supposition, namely, that Buonaparte, now that he is a King himself—and a King he is so far as power can make one,—will no longer be an encourager of those absurd and mischievous doctrines, which, however they may have helped him to the throne, will be as little pleasing to him, now that he is fairly seated there, as to any the most legitimate Monarch. Sir, I agree, that Buonaparte, like other demagogues and friends of the people, having deluded and gulled the people sufficiently to make them answer his purpose, will be ready enough to teach them a different lesson, and to forbid the use of that language towards himself, which he had before instructed them in, as perfectly proper towards others. Never was there any one, to be sure, who used less management in that respect, or who left all the admirers of the French Revolution, within and without,—all the admirers of it, I mean, as a system of liberty,—in a more whimsical and laughable situation. Every opinion for which they have been contending, is now completely trodden down, and trampled upon, or held out in France to the greatest possible contempt and derision. The Honourable Gentlemen on the *Opposition Benches* have really great reason to complain of having been so completely left in the lurch. There is not even a decent retreat provided for them.

But though such is the treatment, which the principles of “the Rights of Man,” and of the “Holy Duty of Insurrection,” meet with in France, and on the part of him who should be their natural protector, it is by no means the same, with respect to the encouragement which he may choose to give them in other countries. Though they use none of these goods in France for home-consumption, they have always a large assortment by them ready for foreign markets. Their Jacobin Orators are not to be looked for in the clubs at Paris, but in the clubs of London. There, they may talk of *cashiering Kings*, with other language of that sort: but should any orator more flippant than the rest choose to hold forth in that strain, in the city where the Great Consul resides, in the metropolis of liberty, he would soon put him to silence, in the way that we see adopted in the sign of the Silent Woman. Buonaparte, being invested, in virtue of the Rights of Man, with despotic power, can afford to sanction the preaching of those doctrines in other countries, of which he will not suffer the least

whisper in his own. While he is at the head of an absolute monarchy in France, he may be the promoter and champion of Jacobin insurrections everywhere else. The abject as well as wicked nature of Jacobinism in this country, which, while it would rebel against the lawful authority of its own government, is willing to enslave itself to France, finds no difficulty of allowing to him these two opposite characters: and I know no reason why we should suppose him disinclined to accept them.

I must confess, therefore, that I see as little hope for us on this side, as I do on the other. In fact, if I could believe, in spite of all probability, that there was any remission of that purpose, which has never yet ceased for an instant,—the purpose of destroying this country,—such belief, however produced, must be instantly done away by a view of the conduct of France, in the settlement of this very treaty. There is not a line of it, that does not either directly point to the destruction of this country, or, by a course a little circuitous, but not less certain, equally tend to the same object. What can France want with any of the possessions which she has compelled us to surrender, but with a view of rivalling our power, or of subverting it, or of removing out of our hands the means of controlling her further projects of ambition?—Of the first sort are all her stipulations for settlements in South America and the West-Indies: of the second, her demand of the Cape and Cochin; and of the last, that most marked and disgraceful condition on our part, the surrender of Malta. What upon earth could France have to do with Malta, but either as a means of humbling us in the eyes of all the world, by the surrender of it, or of depriving us of a port in the Mediterranean that might stand in the way of designs which she is meditating against the countries bordering upon that sea? The miserable prettexts which are formed to palliate this surrender, and the attempt to cover it, in part, by the show of delivering that fortress to the Order, though much the greater part of the Order are now living in the dominions of Buonaparte, and many of them actually serving in his armies, are wholly insufficient, either to conceal our shame, or to disguise the purpose of the French in making this demand. But the circumstances of the negotiation, not less than the treaty resulting from it, show, in another way, the folly of those hopes, which are founded upon the supposed intentions or characters of the persons with whom it is made. It does not augur very favourably for the intentions of a party in any transaction, that there appear in every stage of it the clearest proofs of duplicity and fraud.—What do we think of the artifice, which signs a treaty with us, guarantying the integrity of Portugal; but previously to that, at a period so late, as to make it sure that the knowledge of the transaction shall not reach this country in time,

signs another treaty, totally altering the nature of that guarantee? What shall we think of the candour and fairness, which, in a treaty with us, proposes, as a joint stipulation, the evacuation of Egypt, at a time when the proposers knew, though we did not, that every soldier of theirs in Egypt was actually a prisoner to our troops? Where was their good faith to the Turks, when, in the same circumstances, they knowing the fact and the Turks not, they took credit from the Turks for this very evacuation? Why, Sir, it is a fraud upon a level with any of those practised at a lottery-office. They insure the ticket, at the moment when they know it to be drawn. And are these the people, to whose generosity and forbearance, to whose good intentions towards this country, and above all, to whose good faith, we are to deliver over, bound hand and foot, the interests of the British Empire, to be destroyed or saved, as they, in their good pleasure, shall think fit?

I say nothing here on a topic, however closely connected with the present subject, the character of the First Consul himself—a character hitherto as much marked by frauds of the most disgraceful kind, as by every other species of guilt; but pass on to the question, which meets us at every turn, and seems to stop the progress of all argument, the great question—"What are we to do? The danger is great, but how are we to avoid it? War cannot be eternal, and what prospect have we of reaching a period, when it may be terminated in circumstances upon the whole more favourable than the present?"

Sir, the word, eternal, which in any use of it is sufficiently awful, will undoubtedly not be least so, when associated with the idea of War. But I must beg leave to remind the House of a circumstance, of which they and the country seem never to have been at all aware, that the question of eternal War, is one, which it is not left for us to decide. It is a question which must be asked of our enemies: and is not less proper to be asked, if we could hope that they would answer us, at the present moment, than it was before the signature of the preliminaries. The War depends neither upon conventions to be entered into between the two governments, nor upon acts of hostility which may be committed between the two peoples, by land or on the high seas; but on the existence or non-existence of that fixed, rooted, determined purpose, which France has hitherto had, and which we have no reason whatever to think she has relinquished—of accomplishing the final overthrow of this country. While that purpose exists, and shall be acted upon, we are at War, call our state by what name you please: and the only question is, whether France cannot work as effectually to her purpose in Peace; and if Peace is made in a certain way, infinitely more effectually than she can in what

is professedly and declaredly War. I would really wish to ask, whether Gentlemen have never heard of a people called the Romans, a set of republicans who conquered the world in the old time; and whom the *modern Romans* take as their model in every respect; but in none more than in what relates to the overthrow of this country? Among the nations that fell under the Roman yoke, there were but few whom they were able to fetch down at a blow,—to reduce in the course of a single War. All their greater antagonists, particularly the state whose fate is chosen as a prototype of our own, were not reduced till after repeated attacks, till after several successive and alternate processes of War and Peace: a victorious War preparing the way for an advantageous Peace; and an advantageous Peace again laying the foundation of a successful War. This was at least the conduct of a great people; a people not to be put aside from their purposes by every transient blast of fortune. They had vowed the destruction of Carthage; and they never rested from their design, till they had seen it finally accomplished. The emulators of their fortune in the present day, are, in no less a degree, the emulators of their virtues; at least, of those qualities, whatever they may be, that give to man a command over his fellows. When I look at the conduct of the French Revolutionary rulers, as compared with that of their opponents; when I see the grandeur of their designs; the wisdom of their plans; the steadiness of their execution; their boldness in acting; their constancy in enduring; their contempt of all small obstacles and temporary embarrassments; their inflexible determination to perform such and such things; and the powers which they have displayed, in acting up to that determination; when I contrast these with the narrow views, the paltry interests, the occasional expedients, the desultory and wavering conduct, the want of all right feeling and just conception, that characterize so generally the governments and nations opposed to them, I confess I sink down in despondency, and am fain to admit, that if they shall have conquered the world, it will be by qualities by which they deserve to conquer it. Never were there persons, who could show a fairer title to the inheritance which they claim. The great division of mankind made by a celebrated philosopher of old, into those who were formed to govern, and those who were born only to obey, was never more strongly exemplified than by the French nation, and those who have sunk, or are sinking, under their yoke. Let us not suppose, therefore, that while these qualities, combined with these purposes, shall continue to exist, they will ever cease, by night or by day, in Peace or in War, to work their natural effect,—to gravitate towards their proper centre; or that the bold, the proud, the dignified, the determined, those who *will* great things,

and will stake their existence upon the accomplishment of what they have *willed*, shall not finally prevail over those, who act upon the very opposite feelings; who will "never push their resistance beyond their convenience;" who ask for nothing but ease and safety; who look only to stave off the evil for the present day, and will take no heed of what may befall them on the morrow. We *are* therefore, in effect, at War at this moment: and the only question is, whether the War, that will henceforward proceed under the name of Peace, is likely to prove less operative and fatal, than that which has hitherto appeared in its natural and ordinary shape. That such is our state, is confessed by the authors themselves of the present Treaty, in the measures which they feel it necessary to recommend to the House. When did we ever hear before of a military establishment necessary to be kept up in time of Peace? The fact is, that we know that we are not at Peace; not such as is fit to be so called, nor that in which we might hope to sit down, for some time at least, in confidence and security, in the free and undisturbed enjoyment of the blessings which we possess. We are in that state, in which the majority, I believe, of those who hear me, are in their hearts more desirous that we should be, than, in our present prostrate and defenceless situation, they may think it prudent to avow—in a state of armed truce; and then the only questions will be, at what price we purchase this truce; what our condition will be while it lasts; and in what state it is likely to leave us, should it terminate otherwise than as we are willing to suppose.

This brings us at once to the point. If we are to come at last only to an armed truce, would it not have been a shorter and better course, to turn our War into an armed truce, into which, in fact, it had pretty much turned itself, rather than to take the round-about way which has been now adopted, of making Peace by the sacrifice of all the means of future War, in order afterwards to form an armed truce out of that Peace? Let us state the account, and consider the loss and profit on either side.

The evils of War are, generally speaking, to be comprised under three heads: the loss of lives and the consequent affliction brought upon friends and families; the loss of money, meaning, by that, money expended in a way not to be beneficial to the country that raises it; and the loss of money in another sense, that is to say, money not got; by which I mean the interruption given to national industry, and the diminution of the productions thence arising, either by the number of hands withdrawn from useful labour, (which is probably, however, but little material,) or by the embarrassments and restraints which in a state of War impede and clog the operations of commerce. I do not mean, that there are not in War, evils which may be said not to be in-

cluded properly under any of the above heads; among which may be numbered, the distress arising from sudden changes of property, even when the persons who lose, and those who acquire, are equally parts of the same community. This, however, is an evil that will be more felt at the beginning, than in the later periods of a War; and will, in fact, be likewise felt, though in a less degree, by a transition even from War to Peace. The enumeration now made, however, may be sufficiently correct for the present purpose. And, with this in our hands, let us consider, in what so very violent a degree, the present armed truce, or Peace, if you choose to call it so, differs from what might have been our state, in the case so much dreaded and deprecated, of a continuation of the War.

To take the last first,—the loss of national wealth by the interruption given to commerce and industry; such is the singular nature of this War, such the unexampled consequences with which it has been attended, that it becomes a question, and one in itself of the most anxious and critical importance, on which side of the account the consequences of Peace in this respect are to be placed; whether, instead of balancing the dangers of Peace, if such there are, by accessions which it will bring to our wealth and commerce, we are not rather called upon to prove some great advantages which Peace will give us in respect of security, in order to balance the diminution likely to be produced by it in our commercial opulence. That our commerce will suffer at the long run, admits, I fear, of no doubt. If my apprehensions are just, it is in the diminution of our manufactures and commerce, that the approaches of our ruin will first be felt: but is any one prepared to say that this may not happen in the first instance? We have, at present, subject to the inconveniences which War produces, nothing less than the commerce of the whole world. There is no part of the world to which our goods do not pass freely in our own ships; while not a single merchant-ship, with the enemy's flag on board, does, at this moment, swim the ocean. Is this a state of things to be lightly hazarded? Does the hope of bettering this condition, even in the minds of those most sanguine, so much outweigh the fear of injuring it, that these opposite chances can, upon the whole, be stated otherwise than as destroying each other; and that of consequence, in the comparison of War and Peace, the prospect of increased industry and commerce, which in general tells so much in favour of Peace, must not here be struck out of the account? On this head the question between Peace and War stands, to say the least of it, evenly balanced.

The next of these heads, the first, indeed, in point of consequence, but the next in the order in which it is here convenient to

consider them, is the loss of lives, and the effect which War is likely to have on private and individual happiness. No man can pretend to say, that War can continue upon any footing, however restricted the circle of hostilities, without the lives of men being liable to be sacrificed; and no such sacrifice can be justified, or reconciled to the feelings of any one but by that which must justify every such sacrifice, however great the extent—the safety and essential interests of the State. But if ever there was a War in which such sacrifices seemed likely to be few, not as an effect of any choice of ours, but by the necessary course of events, it was that which we should have had to carry on in future with the Republic of France.

The great and destructive operations of War, the conflict of fleets or armies, or the consumption of men in unwholesome climates and distant expeditions, had ceased of themselves. I know not what expeditions we should have had to prosecute, unless new cases should have arisen, similar to that of the memorable one of Egypt; where, the same motives existing, we should be sorry, indeed, not to have the means of acting upon them. But in general, our fleets would have remained quietly at their stations, and our armies have lived at home: the whole question reduces itself to a mere question of expense; and that again pretty much to a mere question of establishment.—The great heads of war expenditure, the army extraordinaries, would, in most parts, have ceased; and in the rest, have been greatly reduced. The chief question will be, not between an ordinary Peace establishment and a War, such as, from circumstances, ours has hitherto been, involving expeditions to all parts of the globe; but between a Peace establishment, such as that which is now declared to be necessary, and a War, which had become, and was likely to continue, merely defensive; in which we should have had nothing to do, but to maintain a competent force with little prospect of being obliged to make use of it. The advocates for the present Peace must find themselves always in an awkward dilemma, between economy and safety. We make Peace in order to save our money: if we reduce our establishments, what becomes of our security? if we keep up our establishments, what becomes of our savings? Whatever you give to one object, is unavoidably taken from the other. The savings of the present Peace, therefore, can be looked for only between the narrow limits of a high Peace and a low War establishment; or, to state the case more correctly, between a high Peace establishment and a War, reduced in the manner that I have described. I wish that a correct estimate were formed of the difference, in point of expense, between these two states; recollecting always that among the expenses of Peace are to be counted the provisions

necessary against the new dangers brought by the Peace itself; the new dangers for example, with which Jamaica, and all our West-India Islands are threatened by the establishment of the French in Saint Domingo, and other parts in that quarter of the world; the new dangers to which our empire in the East is exposed, by the re-entry of the French into the peninsula of India, and the cession to them, for such in effect it is, of the Cape and Cochin; in general, by the free passage now given to their ships and armies into every part of the world, and the establishment of them everywhere in the neighbourhood of our most valuable possessions.

Against these dangers War provided, as it were, by its own single act. The existence of our fleets upon the ocean, with an Admiralty order "to burn, sink, and destroy," shut up at once, as under lock and key, all those attempts, which are now let loose, and require as many separate defences as there are parts liable to be attacked. A fleet cruising before Brest, therefore, was not to be considered as so much clear expense, to be charged to the account of the War; without deducting the expense of additional troops and additional ships, which the absence of the fleet might require to be kept, for instance in the West Indies.

With respect to home defence. Considering the little reliance to be placed upon the Government in France, now subsisting; the still greater uncertainty with respect to any future Government (such as may arise at any moment); and the increased defence necessary on land, in proportion to the diminution of our force by sea; I know not how we can remain secure with a military establishment much less considerable, than that which we should have had to maintain here in the case of War.—So much for the expenses of Peace.

On the other hand, we must consider, what the reductions are that might be made in the expense of War, beyond those, which the very scheme and shape of the War itself would unavoidably produce.

The expenses of our army, as at present established, are excessive: but what should hinder us from adopting some of those expedients, by which a country not more considerable than Prussia, under the regulations introduced by a former great monarch, is made capable of maintaining a military establishment superior to that of Great Britain?—The chief of those expedients, and that which we could best imitate, is, the putting at all times the half of the army upon the footing of militia, to be exercised only for a month or two, and to be at home for the remainder of the year. Other expedients might be suggested, if this were the proper occasion for discussing them.

It is true, as may be observed, that such a reduction of expense,

if it can be at all effected, may be applied not less in time of Peace than in time of War; and in a comparison, therefore, between the two, must be counted on both sides. But that circumstance, as is plain, does not do away the effect of what is here stated. If both sides are reduced, and reduced at all proportionably, the absolute difference, which is what we are here considering, will be reduced also; not to mention that, with a view to what will be the effect of the measure in other ways, such a reduction may be better applied to a large establishment, than it can to a small one. If an army of 80,000 men, for instance, may, for the moment, be reduced to half, because the remaining 40,000 will still be a sufficient force, it is not to be concluded, that a proportionate reduction might be made in an army of only half that number, when the remainder, left on an emergency for the defence of the country, would be no more than twenty thousand. Consider, therefore, when the reductions capable of being made, or certain of themselves to happen, in a state of War, such as War might be expected to be if continued from the present time, and the new and extraordinary expenses incident to this Peace, shall have been fairly calculated, to what the difference between the two states will amount; and taking then this difference at its utmost, compare the money so saved, with all the evils and dangers which Peace, as now proposed, will give rise to. Or, if the modern fashion is to prevail, and money alone to be considered, compare the value of the Sinking Fund created by this saving, with the difference, in point of mere expense, of the circumstances in which we shall be placed at the commencement of any future War, should France choose to put us under this necessity. By the result of these comparisons, must the question be decided.

Should it so happen, (and who shall say, that it will not?) that our commerce, instead of increasing, or remaining where it is, should fall off; that our manufactures should decline; that, from these and other causes,—such as a great emigration, and considerable transfer of public property;—and above all from the great loss of territorial revenue, the income of the state should be lessened, to a degree equal only to this proposed saving, then we shall have incurred all the dreadful difference to be found in our situation in case of the renewal of War, and all the no less serious dangers during the continuance of Peace, absolutely for nothing.

I select this only as the case which may be considered as the most probable. In argument, to be sure, having already agreed to take at par, our prospects with respect to the increase or decrease of our commerce and manufactures, I am not at liberty to insist on this case, or upon the still more fatal one of a greater and more extensive decrease, without allowing those who argue

on the other side, to avail themselves of the supposition, that the sources of national wealth may possibly be in a great degree augmented.

At all events, however, and whatever be the extent of these expected savings, and the improvement to be made in consequence in our finances, we are to estimate the evils and dangers which are to be placed in the opposite scale, the chief of which I have endeavoured to point out, though in a very hasty and summary manner, in the observations, with which I have already troubled the House. They may be classed, generally under three heads:—The ascendancy, which it is feared, France may in time acquire, even in those sources of greatness, which we seem inclined to consider as a substitute for all others, our manufactures and commerce; supposing, as I am here doing, that Peace continues without interruption, and even without any great advantage being taken, of the threat of a renewal of hostilities. Secondly, the effect to be produced, in a peace so constituted, by the continued use of this menace,—an engine of which it is difficult to calculate the force, applied, as it may be, to every point on which the interests of the countries are opposed, and for the accomplishment of every object, which France may wish to attain. Thirdly and lastly, War itself; begun of course at such moment, as France shall judge most advantageous to her, and when by a due improvement of the preceding period of Peace, Great Britain shall have been placed in a situation to be least capable of resisting its effects. On these points, having spoken to each already, as far as the occasion seems to admit, though far short of what the subject demands, I shall detain the House no longer, but leave to every Gentleman to form his own judgment on the extent and reality of these dangers, and finally to settle the comparison between these (with others connected with them) and the continuance of the War, such as War from this time might be expected to prove. The only head of danger, to which I wish now to speak, is one of a quite different nature; but so serious, so certain, so imminent, so directly produced by the Peace itself, that I must not omit to say a few words upon it. This is the danger now first commencing; and which may be conveyed in a single word, but that, I fear, a word of great import—Intercourse. From this moment the whole of the principles and morals of France rush into this country without let or hindrance, with nothing to limit their extent, or to control their influence. While the War continued, not only the communication was little, or nothing, but whatever contagion might be brought in by that communication, found the country less in a state to receive it. The very heat and irritation of the War was a preservative against the infection. But now that this infection is to come upon us in the soft hour of Peace; that it is

to mix with our food; that we are to take it into our arms; that it is to be diffused in the very air we breathe; what hope, can we suppose, remains to us of escaping its effects?—This, I used formerly to be taught, before the weight of taxes had lessened our apprehensions of French fraternity, was one of the consequences most to be dreaded in Peace, in whatever form it should come, short of the restoration of some Government, not founded on jacobinical principles. But somehow or another, the very idea of this danger seems long since to have vanished from our minds. We are now to make Peace in the very spirit of peace, and to throw ourselves without reserve into the very arms of France. With respect, indeed, to one part of the danger, the principles of France,—meaning by that the political principles,—we are told, that all danger of that sort is at an end; that in this country, as everywhere else, the folly of the revolutionary principles is so thoroughly understood, that none can be found to support them. Jacobinism is, as it were, extinct: or, should it still exist, we shall have, as our best ally against it, Buonaparte himself.

Sir, I have already stated what my confidence is in that ally. I know that neither he personally, nor any other of the *free* governments that have subsisted in France, have ever suffered these doctrines of Jacobinism to be used against themselves. But I must again ask, on what grounds we suppose, that France has renounced the use of them, with respect to other countries? We have heard less, indeed, of late, of her principles, because we have heard, and felt, more of her arms. For the same reason, we may possibly hear little of them in future. But do they therefore cease to exist? During the whole course of the Revolution, France has sometimes employed one of these means, and sometimes the other. Sometimes the arms have opened a way for the principles, at others the principles have prepared the object, as an easy conquest to the arms:—In the flight of this chain-shot, sometimes one end has gone foremost, and sometimes the other, and at times they may have struck their object at once: but the two parts alike exist, and are inseparably linked together.

Nothing, therefore, can, in my mind, be more idle than this hope of the extinction of Jacobinism, either as an instrument to be used by France, should her occasions require it, or as a principle ever to be eradicated out of any community, in which it has once taken root. However true it may be, that the example of France ought to serve as the strongest antidote to its poison, and that it does so, in fact, in the minds of many; yet it is equally true, that, in another view, and to many other persons, it operates in a directly contrary way,—not as a warning, but as an incitement. What I am now speaking of, is, however, not the danger of the political principles of France, but the still surer and more dreadful

danger, of its morals. What are we to think of a country, that having struck out of men's minds, as far as it has the power to do so, all sense of religion, and all belief of a future life, has struck out of its system of civil polity, the institution of marriage? That has formally, professedly, and by law, established the connexion of the sexes, upon the footing of an unrestrained concubinage? that has turned the whole country into one universal brothel? That leaves to every man to take, and to get rid of, a wife, (the fact, I believe, continues to be so,) and a wife, in like manner, to get rid of her husband, upon less notice than you can, in this country, of a ready-furnished lodging?

What are we to think of uniting with a country, in which such things have happened, and where for generations the effects must continue, whatever formal and superficial changes prudence and policy may find it expedient to introduce in the things themselves?

Do we suppose it possible, that, with an intercourse subsisting, such, as we know, will take place between Great Britain and France, the morals of this country should continue what they have been? Do we suppose that when this *Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes*, when that 'revolutionary stream,' the Seine, charged with all the *coluvies* of Paris,—with all the filth and blood of that polluted city,—shall have turned its current into the Thames, that the waters of our fair 'domestic flood' can remain pure and wholesome, as before? Do we suppose these things can happen? Or is it, that we are indifferent, whether they happen or not; and that the morals of the country are no longer any object of our concern?

Sir, I fear, the very scenes that we shall witness, even in the course of the present winter, will give us a sufficient foretaste of what we may expect hereafter; and show, how little the morals of the country will be protected by those who should be their natural guardians, the higher and fashionable orders of society. In what crowds shall we see flocking to the hotel of a Regicide Ambassador, however deep in all the guilt and horror of his time, those whose doors have hitherto been shut inflexibly against every Frenchman; whom no feeling for honourable distress, no respect for suffering loyalty, no sympathy with fallen grandeur, no desire of useful example,—and in some instances I fear, no gratitude for former services or civilities, have ever been able to excite to show the least mark of kindness or attention to an emigrant of any description; though in that class are to be numbered men, who in every circumstance of birth, of fortune, of rank, of talents, of acquirements of every species, are fully their equals; and whom the virtue that has made them emigrants, has, so far forth, rendered their superiors! A suite of richly furnished apartments,

and a ball and supper, is a trial, I fear, too hard for the virtue of London.

It is to this side, that I look with greatest apprehension. The plague with which we are threatened, will not begin, like that of Homer, with inferior animals, among dogs and mules, but in the fairest and choicest part of the creation; with those, whose fineness of texture makes them weak; whose susceptibility most exposes them to contagion; whose natures being most excellent, are, for that very reason, capable of becoming most depraved; who, being formed to promote the happiness of the world, may, when "strained from that fair use," prove its bane and destruction; retaining, as they will still do, much of that empire which nature intended for them, over the minds and faculties of the other half of the species. "The woman tempted me, and I did eat," will be to be said, I fear, of this second fall of man, as it was of the first. Sir, we heard much, last year, of the necessity of new laws to check the growing progress of vice and immorality. I suppose we hardly mean to persist in any such projects. It will be too childish to be busying ourselves in stopping every little crevice and aperture, through which vice may ooze in, when we are going to open at once the flood-gates, and admit the whole tide of French practices and principles, till the morals of the two countries shall have settled at their common level.

I must beg here, not to be told, that of this kind of argument the only result is, that we should never make Peace with France at all, until the monarchy should be restored. The argument implies no such thing. That no kind of Peace with France will be safe, till then, I am not in the least disposed to deny: but the nature of human affairs does not admit of our getting always what we may think most admirable. We must take up often with what is far short of our ideas, either of advantage or safety. The question at present is, whether in either of those views, we ought to take up with the present Peace: and among the evils incident to it, and immediately resulting from it, I state one, which, in conjunction with others, is to be weighed against its advantages; namely, the havoc likely to be made by it in our principles and morals. If any one should be of opinion, that this consideration is of so much weight, that War, almost upon any terms, is preferable to Peace with a state, founded upon a declared Atheism, and filled with all the abominations and pollutions certain to result from such an origin, it is not my business to dispute with him: but that is not the way in which the argument is applied here; nor is it indeed applied in any way, otherwise than as a consideration, making part of the case, and to which every body is to allow what weight he shall think proper. The misfortune of the country has been, that it has never seen, and felt, fully, the extent

of its danger. The country,—speaking of it in general, and not with a view to particular places, or classes of people, upon whom the pressure of the War has borne with peculiar severity,—has been so rich, so prosperous, so happy; men have enjoyed here in so superior a degree, and with such perfect freedom from molestation, all the blessings and comforts of life, that they have never been able to persuade themselves, that any real harm could befall them. Even those, who have clamoured most loudly about the dangers of the country, and have given, at times, the most exaggerated representations of them, have really, and when their opinions come to be examined, never described this danger as any thing truly alarming. For *their* danger has always been a provisional and hypothetical danger, such as we should be liable to, if we did not conform to such and such conditions: but as these conditions were always in our power, and are now, as we see, actually resorted to, our real and absolute danger was, in fact, none at all. “You will be ruined, if you continue the War; but, make Peace, and you are safe:” and unquestionably, as there can hardly have been a period, when a Peace, such as the present, was not in our power,—if such a Peace can give us safety, there never was a period, when we could properly be said to have been in danger. We had a port always under our lee; so that if it came to overblow, or the ship laboured too much, we had nothing to do, but to put up our helm, and run at once into a place of safety. But my ideas of the danger have always been of a far different sort. To me it has ever seemed, that the danger was not conditional but absolute: that it was a question, whether we could be saved upon any other terms; whether we could weather this shoal upon either tack. The port appeared to me to be an enemy’s port; where, though we might escape the dangers of the sea, we should fall into the hands of the savages, who would never suffer us to see again our native land, but keep us in a state of thralldom, far more to be dreaded than the utmost fury of the waves.

I have never pretended to say, that there were not dangers in War, as unquestionably there are great evils; I have said only that there were evils and dangers, not less real and certain, in Peace, particularly in a Peace, made on such terms as the present. For terms of Peace, in spite of what we hear talked, *have* something to do with rendering our situation more or less secure, even in those respects, in which they are supposed to operate least. In general, though terms, however advantageous, would not secure us against the mischiefs of French fraternity, and the infusions of French principles and morals, yet they would make a little difference, I apprehend, as to the effect which Peace would produce ‘he feelings of Europe; as to the air of success and triumph

which it would give to the enemy, and of defeat and humiliation, which it would impress upon us; as to the consequences resulting from thence, even with respect to the propagation of French principles, but certainly as to the confirmation of French power; and, above all, as to the situation in which we should stand, should France choose to force us again into a War. The port of Malta, strong as it is, would not, literally, serve as a bulwark to stop the incursions of Jacobinism: figuratively, it would not be without its effect in that way: yet there would be some difference, I conceive, at the beginning of a War, whether we were in possession of Malta or not; and in the meanwhile, the knowledge of that difference, in the minds of the enemy, and of ourselves, would be quickly felt, in any discussions which might take place between us, in time of Peace.

The dangers of Peace, therefore, are augmented a hundred-fold by terms at once so degrading and injurious, as those to which we have submitted: on any terms on which it could have been concluded, it would have had its dangers, and dreadful ones too; France remaining a revolutionary government, and being, as it is, in possession of Europe. Whether the evil must not ultimately have been submitted to; whether the hopes of change, either from coalitions without, or commotions within, might not have become so small, and the evils of War, however mitigated, so great, that we must have made up our minds, after taking the best securities against those dangers that we could, finally to have acquiesced in them, is a separate question, which I will not now discuss. But the time, in my opinion, was not come when such unqualified acquiescence on our part was requisite; when we were to cease to enquire what those securities were; or when we ought to have taken up with such securities, if securities they can be called, as are offered by the present treaty. The great misfortune has been, that this question of Peace has never yet been fully and fairly before the country. We have been taken up with the War; that was the side of the alternative next to us;—and have never yet, till it was too late, had our attention fairly directed, or, I must say, fairly summoned, to the dreadful picture on the other side. If we had, we should never have heard, except among the ignorant and disaffected, of joy and exultation through the land, at a Peace such as the present.

Here, Sir, I have nearly closed this subject. One only topic remains, a most important one indeed, but which I should have been induced, perhaps, on the present occasion, to pass over in silence, if in one part of it I did not feel myself called upon, by something of a more than ordinary duty.

When a great military Monarch of our time was at the lowest ebb of his fortunes, and had sustained a defeat, that seemed to

extinguish all his remaining hopes, the terms of his letter, written from the field of battle, were—"We have lost every thing, but our honour." Would to God, that the same consolation, in circumstances liable to become in time not less disastrous, remained to Great Britain! I should feel a far less painful load of depression upon my mind, than weighs upon it at this moment. But is our honour saved in this transaction? Is it in a better plight than those two other objects of our consideration, which I have before touched upon, our dignity and our security? I fear not. I fear that we have contrived to combine in this proceeding, all that is at once ruinous and disgraceful; all that is calculated to undo us, in reputation as well as in fortune, and to deprive us of those resources, which high fame and unsullied character may create, "even under the ribs of death," when all ordinary means of relief and safety seem to be at an end. I am speaking here, not of the general discredit that attaches to this precipitate retreat and flight out of the cause of Europe, and of all mankind; but of the situation in which we stand with respect to those allies, to whom we were bound by distinct and specific engagements. I must be very slow to admit that construction, which considers as a breach of treaty any thing done by a contracting power, under a clear *bonâ fide* necessity, such as the other party itself does not pretend to dispute. If an absolute conquest of one of the parties to an alliance does not absolve the other from the obligation which it has contracted, so neither can a timely submission, made in order to avert such conquest, when the remaining party itself shall not be able to describe that submission as injurious either to her own interest, or to that of the common cause. If we were not in a state to say to Sardinia, that it was better for us that she should continue her resistance, rather than accept the terms offered her; then, I say, we are not in a state to consider her submission as a forfeiture of the claims which she had upon us. We have left Sardinia, however, without an attempt to relieve her, without even a helping hand stretched out to support or to cheer her, under that ruin which she has brought upon herself, with no fault on her part, while adhering faithfully to her treaty with us. I must call that adherence faithful, which has continued as long as we ourselves could say, that it was of any use.—The case of Sardinia is, with no great variation, the case of Holland also. Both powers were our allies; both are ruined, while adhering to that alliance; both are left to their fate. But Sardinia and Holland are two only of our allies; and placed in circumstances of peculiar difficulty. There were others, it may be said, more capable of being assisted, for whose security and protection every thing has been done, that the most scrupulous fidelity could require. Naples, Portugal, and Turkey, will attest, to the end of

time, the good faith of Great Britain; and show to the world that *she* is not a power, who ever seeks her own safety by abandoning those with whom she has embarked in a common cause. Sir, if I were forced to make a comparison between the instances, in which we plainly and openly desert our allies, and those in which we affect to protect them, I should say, without hesitation, that those of the former class were the least disgraceful of the two; because our protection is in fact nothing else but a desertion, with the addition of that ridicule which attaches upon things, that endeavour to pass for the reverse of what they really are.

The protection which we yield to these unfortunate powers, is much of the same sort with that which Don Quixote gives to the poor boy, whom he releases from the tree; when he retires with perfect complacency and satisfaction, assuring him, that he has nothing more to fear, as his master is bound by the most solemn promise not to attempt to exercise against him any further severity. We know, Sir, what respect was paid to this promise, as soon as the knight was out of sight; and it is not difficult to foretell, what respect will be paid by Buonaparte, (without waiting even, I am afraid, till my Honourable Friends shall be out of sight,) to this solemn stipulation and pledge, by which we have provided so *effectually* for the security of the dominions of our good and faithful allies.

The ridicule of this provision, which in any case would be sufficiently strong, has, undoubtedly, in the case of Turkey, something of a higher and livelier relish; Turkey being the power, in whose instance, and with respect to precisely the same party, the total insufficiency and nullity of such engagements has been so strikingly manifested, and is still kept so fresh in our memories, by the very operations with which the War has closed.

. So much as to our conduct towards those powers, with whom we stood in the relation of allies, according to the usual diplomatic forms; and whom the common policy of Europe had been accustomed to consider under these and similar relations.

But there was another body of allies, not ranked indeed among the European powers, nor possessing much, perhaps, of a corporate capacity, but who, as men, acting either separately or together, were equally capable of becoming objects of good faith, and in fact had so become, though by means different, in point of form, from those which engaged the faith of the country, in any of the instances above alluded to:—These persons were, the Royalists of France, wheresoever dispersed, but particularly that vast body of them which so long maintained a contest against the Republic, in the West; where they formed the mass of the inhabitants of four or five great provinces, far exceeding, both in extent and population, the kingdom of Ireland. I mention these particulars

of their force and numbers, not because they are material to the present purpose, but because they serve to obviate that delusion of the understanding, by which things, small in bulk, and filling but little space in the imagination, are apt to lose their hold on our interests and affections. The mention of them may, moreover, not be unnecessary in this House, where, I fear, from various causes, all that relates to the Royalists is a perfect *terra incognita*, as little known or considered, as the affairs of a people in another hemisphere. The Royalists were, however, a great, numerous, and substantive body, capable of maintaining against the Republic a War, confessed by the Republicans themselves to have been more formidable and bloody, than most of those in which they had been engaged; and of terminating that War by a Peace, which showed sufficiently what the War had been, and what the fears were, which the Republic entertained, of its possible final success. But let the numbers and powers of the Royalists have been what they might; had their affairs been still less considered; had they been more disowned, discountenanced, and betrayed, than in many instances they were; had more such garrisons as those of Mentz and Valenciennes been suffered to be sent against them; had they been less the real, primary defenders and representatives of that cause, which the Allies professed to support; still there were our formal Proclamations, issued at various periods, not expressly engaging indeed to make stipulations for them in case of a Peace, but calling generally for their exertions, and promising succour and protection, to all those who should declare themselves in favour of the ancient order of things, and of their hereditary and rightful Monarch. What I am to ask, is, have we acted up to the spirit, or even the letter, of our own proclamations? or to the spirit of that relation, in which the nature of the War itself, independent of any proclamations, placed us with respect to these people? I am compelled to say, (I say it with great reluctance, as well as with great grief,) I fear we have done no such thing. I fear, that a stain is left upon our annals, far deeper than that, which, in former times, many were so laudably anxious to wash away, in respect to the conduct of this country towards the Catalans. The Catalans were not invited by any declarations more specific than those which we have made to the Royalists: their claim upon us was in some respects more doubtful. Yet, so far were they from being passed over in silence in the terms of the Peace; so far were they from being abandoned to their fate, left to the merciless persecution of their enemies, that a stipulation was made for a full and complete amnesty for them; and, far more than that, a provision, that they should be put upon the same footing, and enjoy the same privileges, with that province which was in fact the most favoured under the

Spanish monarchy. Yet, because *more* was not done; because they were not placed in the situation of enjoying *all* that they asked;—much of it, perhaps, having more of an imaginary than a real value;—because in a part where their claim was more disputable, perfect and entire satisfaction was not given them; did a large and respectable majority of this House think it necessary to institute a solemn inquiry,—the intended foundation of proceedings still more solemn,—in order to purge themselves and the country, as far as depended on them, from the shame of what they deemed a breach of the national faith.

By what purgations, by what ablutions, shall we cleanse ourselves from this far deeper and fouler blot, of having left to perish under the knives of their enemies, without even an effort to save them, every man of those whom we have *affected*, as it must now appear, to call our friends and allies; with whom we were bound, by interests of far higher import than those of a disputed succession; who were the assertors with us of the common morality of the world; who were the true depositaries of that sacred cause, the very priests of that holy faith, with whom we had joined, as it were, in a solemn sacrament; and who, on all these grounds, but chiefly for the sin of having held communion with us, are now, as might be expected, doomed by the fanatics of rebellion, to be the objects of never-ceasing hostility, to be pursued as offenders, whose crimes can only be expiated by their destruction?

I agree with what has been said by my Honourable Friend [the Chancellor of the Exchequer], that Peace once made, all communication with this, or any other, class of people, hostile to the French Government, must completely cease. Whatever the Government is, or whatever its conduct may be with respect to us, if we think fit to make Peace with it, that Peace must be religiously kept. I am not for curing one breach of faith, by another. But was nothing to be done, in the final settlement of that Peace; and still more during the time which has elapsed since the first commencement of the negotiations? I wish a satisfactory answer could be given to those inquiries. I wish it were true, that, for months past, numbers had not been perishing throughout the Royalist provinces, the victims of their loyalty and honour:—(men hunted down, like wild beasts, for acts, which that Government may call crimes, but which we, I hope, have not yet learned so to characterize;)—simply for want of such means, as might have enabled them to effect their escape, and, after the loss of every thing but what their own minds must bestow, to have sought an asylum in some foreign land.

Sir, I would gladly draw a veil over these facts. But our shame is too flagrant and glaring, to be concealed: the cry of this blood is too loud to be stifled. I beg to wash my hands of it. The share

which I have happened to have in the affairs of this illustrious and unfortunate people; the interest which I have always taken in their cause; make me doubly anxious to vindicate myself from any participation in the guilt of having thus abandoned them. I wish I could vindicate, in like manner, the Government and the Country. Among all our shames, it is that of the most fatal nature, and of which, possibly, we shall longest rue the effects.

Sir, I have done. I have stated, as I thought it my duty to do, what my apprehensions are, as to the nature and consequences of the present Peace. If the evils which I impute to it, are not to be found there, if the dangers which I apprehend should not come to pass, no one will more rejoice in my error than myself: those who differ from me will have nothing to complain of; I shall have alarmed myself; I shall not, probably, even have to reproach myself with having succeeded in alarming them. But if any there should be (there are none I am sure in this House), who should say, that my fears are *not* imaginary; that they think of this Peace as I do; that they apprehend it *will* ruin the country; but that they hope the country may last long enough to serve their turn; that being traders, they think the trade of the country may be lost; that, being manufacturers, they believe its manufactures may decline; but that for this they care but little, provided the Peace in the mean time shall prove advantageous to *them*;—to all such, if any there can be, there could be but one answer,—that they are a disgrace to their country and to their species; and that he must be as bad as they, who, upon such terms, could seek to merit their good opinion, or could solicit their favour. I trust, however, that no such men are to be found; but that all who rejoice in the present Peace, do it under a persuasion, that the good which they may hope to derive from it, individually, is not to be obtained by the sacrifice of the final welfare and safety of their country.

The arguments contained in the above Speech were supported by Dr. Laurence, Mr. William Elliot, and Mr. C. Wynne; and replied to by Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Yorke (Secretary at War), and Mr. Addington (Chancellor of the Exchequer);—after which the address was carried without a division.

ARMY OF RESERVE.

JUNE 20th, 1803.

THE following speech was delivered by Mr. Windham, in the House of Commons, in disapprobation of the plan proposed by the Ministers for raising 50,000 men in England, Scotland, and Ireland, by way of ballot or military conscription. The plan described by the Secretary at War was as follows: a body of 50,000 men, to be called the *Army of Reserve*, was to be immediately raised by ballot, according to the following quotas:—the counties of England and Wales 31,000, London and the Tower Hamlets 3000, Scotland 6000, and Ireland 10,000. The conscripts were allowed to find substitutes, and the term of service was four years, with an extension as to place, to any part of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Islands of Jersey and Guernsey. The officers, to be commissioned by the King, were to come from the half-pay list of the Army, from the Marines, from the East India Company's Service, from persons who had served as officers in Volunteer Yeomanry Corps in Ireland during the late Rebellion, and, if necessary, from the Recruiting Staff. Such were the outlines of the plan to which Mr. Windham made the objections that will be found in the following Speech:

Mr. Speaker—Sir,

THE Honourable Gentleman has introduced this measure in a manner perfectly suitable to the solemnity of the occasion, and to the impression which such an occasion was likely to produce on his mind.—I wish the measure itself had been equally suitable to the manner of its introduction, or to the circumstances out of which it has arisen. But, alas! it has fallen miserably short both of the occasion and of the expectation which I had allowed myself to form of it. Instead of helping us out of our difficulties, it serves only to confirm a most material part of them, and for the rest, to give us but very imperfect and inadequate assistance. This grand measure, of which so much expectation has been raised, turns out, at last, to be nothing more than a mere addition to the Militia, with all the evils incident to that system, perverted and misapplied as it has been for a period of several years past. In addition to 70,000 men raised or raising according to that system, upon the population of Great Britain, and of 18,000 so raised in Ireland, we are now to have 10,000 more for Ireland, and 40,000 for Great Britain, making in the whole the number of 138,000, of which 18,000 (the original militia in Ireland) are to be raised by bounty in the first instance, and the rest to be raised by ballot, with the privilege of exemption from personal service, on the con-

dition of finding a substitute. Does any man dream after this, that it is possible for Great Britain to have an army? The hope is utterly childish. The recruiting of the British army has, as every body knows, long stood still. An army not recruited must, by degrees, waste away. In spite of all the hopes, which some may indulge of transferring men hereafter by new bounties from the force thus raised to the regular army—a most uncertain and ineligible method—the army must unavoidably stand still for the present, and one may venture to say, under the influence of such a system, is not likely to be again put in motion.

This, therefore, is my great, leading, and fundamental objection to this measure, that it destroys all hope, now and hereafter, of a force truly regular—that it completely cuts up the army. This it effects, not so much by the raising of so many men—a measure which at the present moment I am not prepared to object to; but, by admitting the principle of substitution. That a compulsory levy cannot be made without a power of commutation of some sort or other, I am ready to allow.—The grievance would be utterly intolerable. But I hoped, as the Hon. Gentleman knows, that another mode might have been adopted, namely, that of commutation of service for a fixed fine; which fine should be paid, not into the hands of the corps for the purpose of being laid out in providing a substitute, with all the effect which such an additional demand must have in raising the rate of the bounty, but should be paid to Government, to be employed by them in any way they should think proper, or, if you choose to give it an appropriation, for the providing a recruit for the *army*. The great point is to abolish the present competition, under which it is impossible that the army can stand; and with this view, my meaning would certainly be, not merely to abolish this competition so far as it would arise from the body now proposed to be raised, but universally for the whole of the militia, old or new. There should be no recruiting but for the army. The militia, and every force raised by ballot, should consist of nothing but the balloted men, so far as they would go. To insure the service of them, as far as I could, or as far as they were of a description to make their service desirable, I would impose a fine, greater or less, as might ultimately be thought right; but I would sooner leave the service incomplete, than, in order to complete it, introduce that fatal principle of substitution; wrong in a constitutional view, if that were now worth attending to, but far more wrong and perfectly fatal from the effect which it must have of destroying all possibility of recruiting the army.

That it is the militia system, extended as it has been, of late years, and changed as it is in its nature and character, that has put the army, nobody can reasonably doubt. What is there

in the condition of this country that should make it incapable of having an army, in some degree, at least, proportionate to its population? or prevent its having now what it has had in all former times? That the militia system, as carried on of late, would and must prevent this, is perfectly obvious. I want to know what ground there is for concluding that there are any other causes, if these were removed, which must equally produce the same effect? When we say, therefore, that we can get no men for the army, the answer is that we have never fairly tried. Let the experiment be *bonâ fide* made. Abolish the competition: and, in order to meet the effects of the change thus produced, begin now, what the Honourable Gentleman says must be begun some time or other, and put your army on that new footing, which, without being necessary for its improvement, for I know not what improvement it wants, may be necessary to maintain its numbers. The first of these measures, as it has always appeared to me, is to change the condition of service from life to term of years;—a measure on which, if I cannot say, that military men are unanimous, I may safely say, that they are nearly so, and to which I certainly have never heard any objection that could at all be set in competition with the advantages to be expected from it. Its advantages, indeed, if they really exist, are of that sort which must take place of every other consideration. The first merit of a book, says a great critic, is to make itself read. The first merit in the constitution of an army is to provide that it should continue an army.—Let the army, therefore, at this moment, and not at any time of future peace, and with a view to wars that may then be future, be put upon that footing, in which, in conjunction with other changes, it may hope to be recruited as it has hitherto been, and may release us from this dreadful and unheard-of state of being engaged in a war, without an offensive and disposable force. With all the disadvantages which the very memory of the bounties heretofore given, will not fail to produce, even when the bounties themselves, to this inordinate amount, shall be given no longer, I should not despair of seeing our army gradually restored, and the service again go on, as it did in all former times.

It is in conformity to these views that my judgment must be regulated upon the present measure. As a levy of so many men on the principle of ballot I may submit to it, Government declaring it to be necessary, because the urgency of the case seems to leave me no option, and hardly time to consider the question. But as a ballot including the further principle of substitution, I must formally protest against it, because it tends to produce effects, which no consideration of present advantage could, perhaps, justify the incurring; but which, likewise, in my opinion, render the

measure perfectly ill-calculated to meet even the present danger. I may accept the ballot for the sake of the immediate force which it will produce, however disadvantageous I may think it in various other respects; but I must, at least, endeavour to disarm it of its chief mischief, by recommending that the terms of exemption from service should be a fixed fine, as I would, for the same reason, extend that principle to every other part of the militia.

But here I must make my formal complaint of the Government, which, by its neglect, its delays, its total want of all foresight and precaution, has brought us to a state in which no measure that is presented to us, can be fairly judged of. We are in straits in which we have no room to turn ourselves. The danger presses upon us so immediately, that we have not time to consider what is best: we must take up with what is first presented to us. Why has this measure been delayed to the present time? Why has it only now been discovered that a force, of the sort here proposed, would finally become necessary, and why, if such necessity was foreseen, has the time and manner of raising it only now been submitted to this House? Above all, why was the country reduced to its present defenceless state, immediately upon the signature of the Treaty of Amiens, in spite of what must have been obvious, one should have thought, to every common observer of what the Ministers now tell us, they themselves saw; namely, that the peace which they had made was no peace; but was open, at every moment, to such a rupture as that which has now happened. In this state did they think it right to dismantle our fleets, to reduce considerably our army, to discharge troops, which, in six weeks after, they wished to have back, or which, if they did not wish to have back, as the Honourable Gentleman's gestures would seem to indicate, it is only a new proof how little they understood the real nature of their situation. All this was done for the miserable purpose of deluding the people with the false idea of the blessings, as they were called, of Peace, and of the money they were to save by thus parting with all the means of safety.

Leaving these reflections for the present, though I trust never forgetting them, let us turn to the consideration of the measure immediately before us: and this, perhaps, we cannot properly judge of without taking into our view the larger principles on which measures of this sort must depend. We are in a new and unprecedented state of things, in which new dangers exist, and new modes of resistance must be resorted to if we would hope not to be overcome by them. If we proceed in the old beaten course, if we think that what saved us heretofore must be sufficient to save us now, our destruction is inevitable.

The great desideratum which we have to make good, the great problem which we have to propose to ourselves, is to find the means

by which that natural force, which, in this as in all similar instances, is on the side of those attacked, may be so applied as to overcome the superior advantages of another kind which may be found on the side of the enemy.—If the enemy could bring with him an army not more considerable than that which we should have to oppose him, great as the object is at stake, much as I should advise that even in that case no precautions should be omitted, yet such is my confidence in the excellence of British troops, such are the proofs which they have given of their capacity to contend with and to overcome upon any thing like equal terms the troops with whom they would have to deal, that even without those subsidiary aids, which yet it would not be right to neglect, I should feel perfectly at ease about the event.

But we are to calculate upon the supposition, a supposition far from inconsistent with the probability of the fact, that the enemy may be able to land an army in this country greater either than the whole of our regular force, or at least than that part of it which could immediately be collected to oppose them. The question then is, how shall this deficiency be supplied? And here we have, as the foundation of our hopes, this leading fact, that in the case of every invaded country, but certainly of every invaded island, the physical force is always on the side of the invaded. No country, probably, was ever invaded by a force superior in number to the portion of the inhabitants of that country capable of bearing arms. It certainly will not happen to us to be so. Were the enemy to find the means of putting on shore in different parts, a body of a hundred thousand men, a supposition not likely, but by no means to be rejected as impossible, the population of this very town would yield a force that ought to make no difficulty of contending with them.—There is no question therefore of the sufficiency of physical force: but, though we are abundantly satisfied of this truth, to a degree indeed that leads us often into a childish and boastful confidence, let us not overlook another truth, not less important and certain, that in the conduct of human affairs it is rarely the physical force which determines the event. If it did so, no country, as appears by what is just said, would ever fall a prey to invasion. Hanover would at this time be an independent country. It was not for want of inhabitants capable of bearing arms that that country yielded up without a blow, its laws, its government, its liberties, its property, to the handful of men, comparatively speaking, who marched against it under General Mortier. It is thus, in other instances. A battle is fought, a fortress is taken, and the country submits. If we have a mind to pursue this truth, in cases of a different sort,—by what means do all the governments of the earth subsist? By possessing the physical force? Quite the contrary: the physical force

is always on the side of the governed. Governments, with all their establishments of senates and magistrates, and ministers and officers, and even with the armies which they may have at their disposal, are nothing, in point of numbers, compared with the inhabitants at large: yet thus weak in physical force, these governments are able, fortunately for the peace and happiness of the world, to hold in subjection those inhabitants, and that not only in countries where the general sentiment may be supposed to go with the government, and the submission of consequence to be voluntary, as in these happy realms, but in countries such as that of France at this moment, where of 50 or 60 millions or more, whom Bonaparté may have at his disposal, there are not probably as many thousands who really wish him well or submit to his government on any other principle than that of fear. This truth, therefore, the jacobinism of modern times chose as the foundation of all its operations, the scope and object of which was to apply the physical force of every country to the subversion of its government.

We are in circumstances, when we must prosecute a similar enquiry for a very opposite purpose; and must endeavour to find out how the physical means of a great country may be employed, not for the overthrow of its government, but to save itself from the incursion of foreign armies. And we may venture to say, that if these means can be gradually discovered and brought into use, the discovery will form an epoch in human affairs hardly less important, and certainly much more satisfactory, than that which was produced by the discovery above alluded to, of the art of overthrowing governments.

We are now in the state of being compelled to try what can be done towards effecting this great *desideratum*; in which if we cannot succeed better than has been done in most of the countries of Europe, in Hanover, in Holland, in Flanders, in Italy, in Switzerland, the fate of this country will hang on nothing but chance. We must form our judgment of the present measure by its tendency to carry those endeavours into effect.—The general course of the proceeding, in the minds of his Majesty's Ministers, seems to have been this—A regular force, a force consisting of troops of the line, is confessedly the best; but circumstances, and above all the urgency of the case, will not allow of this being obtained in time. Not being able therefore to obtain the best, you must do what the law directs in the case of evidence, you must get the next best. This next best is a Militia, or a force raised upon the principles now proposed. There will therefore be three species of force in the country, 1st, the Regulars, 2dly, the Militia, and 3dly, the Volunteers, and other corps of that description; and these being to be taken, in point of preference, in the order in

which they are here enumerated, the Regulars being to be considered as better than the Militia, and the Militia than the Volunteers—the masculine more worthy than the feminine, and the feminine more worthy than the neuter; you must do this, as all persons must do in similar circumstances, you must take the second when you cannot get the first, and the third when you cannot get either of the other two.

All this, so stated, is perfectly true. I am willing to admit, not only that the Regulars are better than the Militia, which no intelligent Militia officer will feel at all disposed to deny; but that Militia, in equal numbers, are better than any other species of force of an establishment still less regular.—But in the application of this to the support of the present measure there is a complete fallacy; for it is not what the option would be between these descriptions of force supposing them all before us, or, putting one out of the question, what would be the choice between the remaining two; but whether you will begin by raising that which you do not consider as best, and thereby produce a state of things in which to obtain the best shall be no longer practicable. From the language held about the comparative value of these objects you would suppose a course to be taken the very reverse of that actually pursued; you would suppose the higher bounty given for the best force: and that it was only when hopes on that side were nearly exhausted, that you laid out your endeavours on a force confessedly less eligible. But just the contrary. You give your fifteen guineas for service in the Militia; and ten or five for service in the army: and then you exclaim, that you are obliged to have recourse to Militia, because you can get no army.—This statement, therefore, when applied thus generally, can by no means be admitted. All that can be said is, that in the mode proposed, and by a continuance of the Militia system, you will, for a time, raise your men faster, and will within that same time produce a greater force. The question will then be, how far the superior quantity will compensate the difference of quality; and how far present advantages must be made to outweigh, in the actual circumstances, all consideration of objects, even of the highest consequence, in future.

In this view it may be necessary to say a word or two, on the difference that must, for ever, subsist between troops of the line, and every other species of troops serving upon the footing of a Militia. It is as little pleasant to me, as to any other gentleman, to be making comparisons, that can rarely be satisfactory to both parties, and to be remarking perpetually to officers of the Militia, that, after all their zeal, all their intelligence, all their honourable sacrifices, all their meritorious exertions, and with all the well-founded vanity which they may feel at the success of their endeavours; a success far exceeding all that the founders of the Militia

ever ventured to promise themselves; the service in which they have thus laboured, cannot, by the very nature of it, ever attain to all the qualities which belong to regular troops. It is no reproach to them that this should be so; because it is no reproach to any one that he cannot alter the nature of things; at the same time I do not say that the reflection may not be in some small degree painful: it may be painful to those who have done so much, to think that it should not be possible for them to do every thing; that they must find in the nature of the subject those limits which they do not find in their own zeal or talents.—The difference between the two services, is founded on the eternal difference that must subsist between troops, who always remain at home, and those who are placed from time to time in distant stations; between troops who have seen service, and those who, generally speaking, have not; between troops commanded by officers, who have never acted with them in difficulties and dangers, who have never shown, because they have had no opportunity of showing, their title to command by the valour which they have displayed, who can pretend to no experience, who can bring no authority from former reputation;—and troops, whose officers possess in themselves all these sources of ascendancy, and all these claims to respect. There is, moreover, a sort of soldier character, arising from a thousand causes, and acquired insensibly in the course of regular service, which will easily be distinguished by discerning eyes, and will furnish in general a marked discrimination between the Militia soldier, and the soldier of the line. These circumstances must of course enter into account when we are regulating our choice between the two services, and founding our measures on the mixed consideration of numbers in each, compared with their respective qualities.—However confident I may feel that our Militia force will prove a most valuable part, should the enemy come, of the national defence, however certain I am that in the day of action Militia regiments will be found who will have distinguished themselves not less than the choicest troops we have, I can never say, generally, that a force of that description is to be put upon a level with that of the regular army.

I have been surprised, therefore, to hear it urged, that while a certain number of men must be kept at home for the defence of the country, it was a matter of indifference whether our army to that amount was composed of Militia or Regulars. I thought I had heard upon other occasions high hopes expressed of the security which the country must derive from the return of those veteran legions, who had so crowned themselves with glory, and established the military fame of the country, in Egypt and other places. But according to this idea, they could do no more for us than any other equal number of troops, who had never seen

an enemy. But is even this the only difference between Regulars and Militia, between a disposable and an undisposable force? Though the circumstances of the war may, at one time, require a force of a certain amount to be kept within the kingdom, the next moment may set a great part of it at liberty; and is it of no consequence that its constitution should be such as to make it incapable of availing itself of that liberty? Nay, if even that should be so, and that in point of fact the power of sending it abroad was one of which no use could be made, is it indifferent whether the enemy is apprized or not of that truth, and whether he is enabled to calculate his plans upon the previous knowledge, that the force existing in the country can, in no case, be sent against him? If the evils with which we have to struggle, if the dangers which threaten us, are ever to end, it must be by some change, from within or from without, which shall be made in that power which has sworn our destruction, and which, till she is destroyed herself, will never cease in her endeavours to accomplish it. And what must be the counsels, and what the situation of this country, if we are voluntarily to place ourselves in a situation, in which it shall be impossible for us to co-operate in producing any such change, or in availing ourselves of it, if it should happen by other means? If such is our situation, or such are our ideas, there is no difficulty in predicting that we must ultimately perish.

In every view, therefore, either of what is to be looked to hereafter, or is necessary in the present moment, I must condemn a measure, of which both the immediate effect, and final tendency, is to deprive the country of a regular army, that is to say, of the best means for home defence, and of the only means of effectual and finally successful war.—And here it may not be amiss to advert to another measure of less extent, but of the same general character, and which, as far as it goes, is a revival of that system unhappily adopted in the beginning of the last war, and from the effects of which the army has not yet recovered; namely, that of raising men for rank. Notwithstanding all the modifications and temperaments introduced into it by the Honourable Gentleman, the effects of it, as far as the measure extends, will be much the same as in the former instance. No prohibitions will ever restrain officers placed in those circumstances, from giving more than the regulated bounty. In fact, it is notorious that they do give more; the effect of the measure therefore, in this respect, is only to add to the competition against the army already subsisting, and to raise the rate of bounty against the other recruiting parties; against the ordinary recruiting, you may say, of the same regiment. So that it can hardly be considered as adding a man to the army.—On the other hand, if money is not to be employed in raising these men, money I mean beyond the rate of bounty

allowed by the regulation, then what are you to rely upon?—Upon a hope ten times more fatal in the accomplishment of it, in my opinion, than any effect likely to result from the increase of the rate of bounty; namely, that a certain number of British officers, forgetting that delicacy of sentiment, and nice sense of honour, which so peculiarly mark the character of officers in our service, and make them what they are, will become, what is called, able recruiters, that is to say, men versed and expert in the noble art of crimping, one of the most degrading employments, and most inconsistent with all upright and liberal feelings, that can well be conceived.

Such is the state of the measures offered to us at last by His Majesty's government, in this most awful crisis of our affairs, with a view of averting the dreadful dangers with which we have to struggle. I have stated already the changes which I should wish to see introduced into these measures, and the course which I would pursue with respect to those parts of general defence of which we have here been treating. If a body of men must be raised by ballot, of which I do not care to give a decisive opinion, let the numbers be confined to the mere men balloted, and let the sums paid as penalties for exemption be laid out not for completing these corps, but for augmenting the recruiting fund for the service of the army.—Let the same be done for the militia universally. If government have a mind to procure substitutes, in any instance, for the old militia, let it take the providing these substitutes into its own hands, so as to see that no increase be thence made to what it should fix for the rate of bounty. Let the condition of service in the army be changed so as to make the engagement for term of years instead of for life, with such increasing advantages held out, at the close of succeeding periods, (as well by certain privileges to be then enjoyed, as by bounties and increase of pension,) as might be most likely to ensure a continuance of the service of the men once engaged.—To these changes should be added a total abolition of drafting, not silently introduced, and adopted merely in practice, but so declared beforehand, as that its benefits might be felt in the recruiting. In general, in this as in many other regulations that might be proposed, the maintaining, or rather the creating, an army would be my object, conceiving that even for purposes of mere defence, a small portion of truly regular troops, in conjunction with the undisciplined efforts of the country, may be set in balance against a very large proportion of troops imperfectly formed.

Thus far I have been considering only, what may be called the embodied force of the country. But will this force, increase it, constitute it, how you will, be sufficient? And must not a new and larger fund be resorted to, namely, that which will embrace

all the strength, energy, zeal, talents, faculties mental and corporeal, of the country? If we think that we can be protected by any of the ordinary means of war, by trusting our defence to men, dressed as soldiers, and hired or compelled to defend us, bating the chances, by sea or otherwise; that may interpose to defeat the enemy's projects in the first instance, we are little less than undone. This embodied force, be it good or bad, can go but a very little way. You cannot have it, if you wait to the last moment; to call it forth beforehand, to the necessary amount, would be an evil which the state of society in this country could never endure. This evil will be felt to a fearful extent in the present measure; without, at the same time, any adequate advantage being derived from it. The whole, indeed, of this measure is of that sort of which the examples are so numerous, and which are calculated more for show than use. We hear often of parliamentary grounds, and in cases where parliamentary grounds would seem to be something distinct from grounds of reason and common sense. In the same manner we meet occasionally with what may be called parliamentary measures: that is to say, measures which in skilful hands will make an imposing figure in a statement, particularly when addressed to persons wholly unconversant with the subject; but will never pass upon experienced and intelligent men, and will be found utterly to fail in practice: a sort of show-goods, such as will appear to sufficient advantage in a shop-window, but will never bear the eye of a dealer, and will be found wholly unfit for wear. At all events, you must have recourse to other, and more extensive means. You must prepare the country: you must put the country in a situation in which its patriotic zeal, its native courage, its various and abundant energies, may have a way to operate and produce their natural effects.

The general plan, which presents itself to me for that purpose, and on which a thousand others might be engrafted, according as circumstances varied, or future views developed themselves, would be instantly to distribute the country, or such parts of it as you wished immediately to prepare (for one merit, at least, of this plan is, that you may take as much or as little of it as you please) into small divisions of two or three contiguous parishes each, according to the population, stationing an officer in each, with a small deposit of arms and ammunition, and whose office it should be, in concert with all the zeal, intelligence, and influence which he might find in the neighbourhood, to train those who should voluntarily offer themselves, to such parts of military training as they would be alone capable of, and as are, after all, by far the most important. It would never enter into my idea, to introduce into bands of this sort any of the foppery of dress, or any distinctive dress at all; a riband, or even a handkerchief

round the arm, to distinguish those, who were receiving this instruction, from the crowd that might occasionally accompany them, is all that would be necessary. Those essential parts of military training, as they seem to be thought, a fife and a drum, the marching in rank and in file, the wheeling backwards, the eyes right and eyes left, whatever may be their value on other occasions,—a point that I do not presume to meddle with—must here, however reluctantly, be given up. Firing at a mark, learning, indeed, to fire at all, which (thanks to the game laws) few of our peasantry are acquainted with; some instruction in the manner of cleaning arms, much instruction in the methods of lining hedges, firing from behind trees, retiring upon call, and resuming a new station; these are all the heads of discipline to which I should propose them to be exercised.

It is not, indeed, very well ascertained what proportion these may bear, (a very deficient one, no doubt,) to the whole of what is required of soldiers; nor how far much of that which use and prejudice have taught us to consider as essential, might be dispensed with, though possibly not without some disadvantage, even in regular armies. It is not very clear, that troops in the Duke of Marlborough's time, were required in marching to move all of them the same leg at once. Much of the modern practice was introduced under the authority of the great King of Prussia, who adapted his system to his own mode of warfare—the warfare of large armies in open countries—and might himself possibly be aware, that many of its rules, though upon the whole desirable, were not of that importance which his less-informed imitators have since ascribed to them. The French, whose authority at this time it is not for Europe to dispute, have changed back much of what was then introduced, and have got nearer in some respects to what was the old practice, but more nearly perhaps to what was the practice in the late American war: and though with them the eternal difference between trained and untrained; between regular and irregular; (what are called irregular being with them perfectly regular troops in their own kind) between veteran and disciplined soldiers and hasty levies, is perfectly understood; yet the mode of warfare introduced by them countenances much more than heretofore, the utility of such armed and partially instructed bodies, as that which I have presumed to recommend.

The measure is, at least, good as far as it goes. It draws no man from his home; it puts no man in a state of painful constraint; it stops no man in his business, so as to leave his family to distress, or to become a charge upon the public. It has the further merit of not interfering with any thing else, so as to prevent any man from entering the army, or navy, or militia, or serving the state in any other way.

Expense I would have none. The pay of the officer, the price of the powder consumed, the hire of the store-house for depositing the arms in cases where the parish church could not be made to serve the purpose, with such an allowance to the men, as was a mere equivalent for their lost time, these would be the whole, or nearly the whole, of the expenses incident to the plan, which certainly could not be thought objectionable on that score.

So much as to its negative merits. As to its advantages, it provides for a distribution of arms whenever the time shall come, and it prepares the people in a certain degree for the use of them. It fills the country with powder and ball; and it instructs those in whose custody they are placed, to what hands, when the emergency shall call for it, they may be entrusted to the greatest advantage and with most safety. The officer, aided by the leading gentlemen, by the clergyman, by the principal yeomen and others, and having continued intercourse with the lower orders, will soon be able to form a tolerable judgment of those on whom he may rely, upon such an occasion, and those who, from feebleness or otherwise, are less worthy of such confidence. But the greatest, possibly, of all the advantages which I should be inclined to hope from this plan is, that it will produce that most important of all preparations, the preparation of the mind. It seems to be almost the only way, (I must think the most effectual,) in which the people will be thoroughly impressed with a conviction of the danger. The present measure will, I confess, prove a powerful instructor as far as inconvenience goes: but inconvenience is, at least, not the pleasantest way of conveying instruction. But the present measure will never instruct the people in this, that it must be on their own exertions, that they must depend for salvation. One main object of the measure is, that its tendency is the direct reverse. In the other way, both a sense of the danger, and a knowledge of the means necessary to be employed against it, will be carried into every farm-house and every cottage. It will be the conversation of the village green, of the church porch, and, what is not the least perhaps, of the ale-house. Men will be turning their thoughts to what they can do upon the occasion, will be calling up the memory of former exploits, will be counting upon their newly-acquired means and knowledge, and above all will be familiarizing their minds to the object. It is not to be told how much of military knowledge (which is nothing more than the application of common sense to situations, new indeed, but soon capable of being comprehended), will spring up under this cultivation, in situations where apparently it was to be least expected. An officer stationed in this way, if only by promoting military conversation, will become a source of instruction by no means to be despised. Every day of exercise or walk into the fields will

be a sort of clinical lecture. If the officer be an intelligent man, and has seen service, he will soon find himself surrounded by people, who will have acquired under his instructions reasonably good military ideas, and have qualified themselves, should the occasion arise, to render him very useful assistance.

This sort of armed force, not confined, like the volunteers hitherto raised, to small troops in towns, and who (without disparagement be it spoken) consist for the most part of persons, who from bodily force, habits, and situation of life, cannot generally be expected to support the fatigues of military service,—this sort of armed force, co-extensive with the active population of the country, though it cannot of itself stop the march of an army, must produce an immense effect, aided by troops of yeomanry, whose utility will be very great, in co-operation with such resistance as we expect from forces of a different description. When we talk of the difference to armies of acting in a friendly or a hostile country, we certainly do not suppose that difference to be less, because the hostile country happens to be prepared and armed.

But every preparation of this sort has hitherto, by His Majesty's ministers, been completely neglected. We are, for aught we know, within two months of invasion, and the measure now just brought forth, is the only measure except the calling out of the militia, which they appear to have thought of.—But they do, it seems, immense things in secret.—True dignity shows itself in calm! Why, Sir, what these measures can be, of which the country knows nothing, it is not very easy to comprehend; and therefore one a little distrusts the nature of this calm.—There are different sorts of calm. There is the calm of confident and complacent hope, and the calm of despair. The calm of men, who having passed the first agitation of danger, have settled their minds to a determined resistance to it; and the calm of those, who are only tranquil, because, from ignorance or insensibility, they are wholly incredulous of its approach. I wish the Honourable Gentlemen's calm may not be that of a wretched lodger, who, hearing a noise below, instead of manfully getting up to resist the robbers, only hides his head in the bed clothes, and hopes they may go off with their other booty without coming into his apartment.

Their secrecy too is altogether as whimsical an idea. They observe, I suppose, that Buonaparte is very secret; and judging him, as they well may, to be a great Captain, they conceive, by imitating his secrecy, that they shall appear to be great Captains themselves. But they forget the difference between attack and defence. A man who means to surprise his enemy does very right keep his intentions secret; but it is not altogether so proper on

the part of him who means only not to be surprised. An officer who was about to surprise a post by a night attack, would do very well not to tell his soldiers, whither he was leading them; but it would be odd, if the officer on the other side was to say to the next in command, "I have intelligence that we shall be attacked to-night; but remember this is only for yourself. Don't say a word to the guard; secrecy is the very soul of military operations."—There is another rather material difference, that Buonaparte has nothing to do but to issue his orders with a certainty that they will be punctually obeyed, whether the army like them or not, whether they are called upon to execute them at a longer or shorter notice, or whether they have any conception or not of the general purpose which they are meant to answer. But the army here to be applied to, is the people of Great Britain, who, besides that they may debate a little upon the orders which they receive, must act in a great degree from their own impulse and discretion, and who will never be brought to act at all, if they themselves are not previously made sensible of the danger.—I, for one, will not pay them so bad a compliment as to suppose that they are not fit to be trusted with this secret. I disclaim the notion, I renounce "as impious and heretical" that "damnable doctrine," that to blind the people as to their true situation, to conceal from them the reality of the danger, is the only way to keep up their courage. If this is really their state, then is the country in a deplorable way indeed: but changed as the people of this country are, by a thousand causes, and under the influence of a sort of language and policy which has prevailed for so many years, I will never believe, that they must be lulled into a false security, be exposed to all the dreadful dangers of a surprise, (the effects of which no man can calculate,) because, to show them their danger, would be to dismay them. How do we combine this with all the vaunting and high-flown compliments, which we are for ever paying them? Are they only brave, when they believe there is no danger? I reject the imputation. Their safety depends upon their exertions; and their exertions must be stimulated, as I am confident they will be stimulated, by a sense of their danger.

In addition to those exertions which the people themselves must make, and on which must rest our chief hopes, there is much that ministers themselves ought to be diligently employed about, but to which I must suspect no attention has been given. Every officer of note and character in the country ought to be called upon for his opinion: not an opinion given in conversation, and with an obliging acquiescence, perhaps, to the presumed notions or wishes of the person he is talking to, but such as must stand in evidence against him, and on which his military judgment and credit will

be at stake. Innumerable measures of precaution are likewise necessary, and which would not be the less useful, because they would be attended with no expense or distress to the country. I do not object to the present measure on account of the expense and inconvenience which attend it, great as they will be. Whatever is necessary must be done, let the hardship be what it will. But I beg that we may not invert the proposition, as many are apt to do, and suppose that whatever is burthensome and oppressive, must therefore be efficacious. I suspect the present measure to be of that character; possibly in all its parts; but unquestionably I must object to it, in that part, which goes in the first instance, and finally, as I believe, to make it impossible for us to have an army.

After a debate in which Mr. Addington (Chancellor of the Exchequer) vindicated the proposed measure, and Mr. Pitt approved the principle of it, but objected to some of its provisions, the address which had been moved by the Secretary at War was put, and carried without a division.

DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY.

DECEMBER 9th, 1803.

MR. BRAGGE, Secretary at War, moved that the House should resolve itself into a Committee of Supply on the Army Estimates, which included, amongst other provisions, the sum of 730,000*l.* for the Volunteer Corps of Great Britain. On the question being put on the first resolution,

MR. WINDHAM began by adverting to the manner in which the business had been opened by the Honourable Secretary, which, he said, though very proper at any ordinary time, and though possibly very proper then, was so different from the view which he felt himself compelled to take of the subject, that his observations, he feared, would appear very little to arise out of the statements which the House had just heard. His view of the subject went to the general defence of the country both present and to come. Under that notion, the difficulty was to know where to begin, or how to confine the discussion within such bounds as he should wish to prescribe to it. It was impossible, in the course of such an inquiry, not to bring forward many points that must bear hard upon the Honourable Gentlemen opposite. He could not arraign the measures of the time without arraigning the conduct of those, by whom these measures were planned; nor could he suffer his mind to be so engrossed and absorbed, as seemed to be the case with many, by the mere business of defence, as to lose all thought about the conduct and character of those to whom the national affairs were entrusted. This last, though in some respects a secondary consideration, inasmuch as it must be founded on a previous examination of public measures, was, nevertheless, a very important and necessary one, was connected with every part of the subject, and might serve, perhaps, as well as any that could be chosen, to present the subject in that point of view, in which it was most important to consider it. His own general opinion on this head, he could not better describe, than in some lines which gentlemen might have seen on Inn windows and shutters, where the writer, speaking of the faults of men and women, and allowing that many faults belong to men, concludes, most injuriously and ungallantly,

Poor women have but two:
There's nothing good they say, and nothing right they do.

These lines, however bad the poetry, and however false the sentiment in its original application, were, he was sorry to say, perfectly descriptive of his opinion of His Majesty's present ministers. That he might not seem to say this at random, without foundation or proof, he would beg only to take a short view of their conduct, as applicable to the actual state of things. If he were to proceed strictly in this inquiry, though by no means unjustly, he should take up their conduct from the moment of the Treaty of Amiens. It was from that period, according to the opinion of many at the time, according to their own opinion, as declared since, that measures of precaution and defence ought to have begun. They who had declared that, from the moment of the signature of that treaty, the conduct of the enemy was a continued series of *violence, insult, and aggression*; they whose partisans had told us, that he must be 'nature's fool,' and not the Honourable Gentleman's, who could ever believe in the durability of that treaty; *they* certainly could not refuse to accept the Treaty of Amiens, as the period from which the defence of the country ought to have been a subject never absent from their minds. But as he did not wish to deal hardly with the Honourable Gentlemen, as it would be mean and niggardly to be sparing of concessions where the materials of charge existed in such abundance, he would be content to date his examination from a much more recent period, and to leave out all the intervening space between the Treaty of Amiens, and the 8th of March, the day on which His Majesty's message was brought to parliament. He would suppose it to have been perfectly right that, from the moment peace was made, no matter with what circumstances, you were to proceed according to the established rule in such cases, were to reduce your army, dismantle your fleet, dispose of all your stock and implements of war, sell off gun-boats for little more than the value of the old iron, refuse for five guineas men whom you would be happy now to get back for fifty; discharge others, whom you could not get back at all. All this he would conclude to be right, and that, without the observance of these accustomed forms, ministers would never have been able to persuade the country, or to satisfy themselves, that the peace which they had made was a real peace, and not a mere make-believe. He would consider their conduct only during the period subsequent to the 8th of March. The establishments of the country were then happily brought to the standard at which it is proposed they should remain; all the reductions had been completed; no subsequent alteration had taken place; a vote in parliament might have passed, but nothing more: all the means of defence were as much to be recollected as if the country had never been at war. Giving ministers full credit for the completely defenceless state in which the coun-

try then was, he would proceed to consider, what the change was which they had since effected, and what the means which they had possessed for that purpose; so that by a comparison of the means possessed, and the work done, a judgment might be formed as to the degree of blame or merit ascribable to their conduct.

And here he would wish to adopt a method, such as was often employed on other subjects, where, when the *quantum* of objects could not be ascertained with exactness, means were resorted to for assigning at least a *maximum* or *minimum*. He had heard, where in the case of exorbitant election-charges, in a bill for cockades for instance, the candidate had offered to pay for all the ribands that could be proved to have been in the shop for the last six months; or, where the charge was for liquor, instead of attempting to calculate the number of drinkers, and the average quantity they might severally have drunk, he had proposed not only to pay for all that had been in the cellar within a certain time, but to *gauge the house*, and to give credit for all that could have been contained in it, supposing it to have been one entire cistern of liquor from the cellar to the garret. He would pursue a course somewhat similar in estimating the merit of the exertions of the Honourable Gentlemen. Instead of saying 'so much ought to have been done in recruiting, so much in completing the militia, so much in procuring defence other ways,' he would rather beg the house to take a general view of the means possessed by the country, of the manner in which ministers had the disposal of these means, of the time they have had to employ them, and comparing the whole with the result, to determine in their own minds, whether the affairs of the country, in this most critical concern of its defence, had or had not been placed in proper hands. Let the several heads of comparison, as he had enumerated them, be considered more in detail. The means of the country, in its first and greatest article, the basis of all the rest, was a population of fifteen millions. The time, as he had agreed to take it, from the 8th of March, was nine months, or three quarters of a year. The wealth of the country was, he must confidently say, for this purpose unlimited. There was nothing that the country was not willing to do in the way of personal service, or to contribute in the way of money. It was long, indeed, before the Honourable Gentlemen thought fit to call upon them. Whether it was that they feared to alarm the holders of *omnium*, according to their own original account, or whether they distrusted the zeal of the country, according to the explanation given of their intentions, in their second edition, when they had had the assistance of a learned commentator (Mr. Sheridan); whichever of these was the case with respect to them, the result

of the fact was, that the country was no sooner told of its danger, and summoned to rouse in its defence, than it obeyed the call with an alacrity which the Honourable Gentlemen have since confessed themselves to have been unprepared for. 'They did not call spirits from the vasty deep,' which refused to answer to their bidding.—On the contrary, the Honourable Gentlemen had no sooner began to *try* for this zeal, had hardly begun to sink this well, before the national feeling rose so fast upon them, that they found themselves in danger of being overwhelmed by it, and begged for God's sake to be pulled up again. They had no sooner turned this cock, than it spouted in their faces. They had nothing to plead, therefore, on the score, that the country did not second their efforts, that it withheld its assistance, that it kept back its milk, as it were: the country was ready to yield its resources to any amount for which they would have declared it necessary to call for them.

So far as to the means which they *possessed*. But were the means *employed* inconsiderable, or not abundantly sufficient to prove the improvident management of those who had the administration of them? The money expended for the army of reserve alone, and that, too, in mere bounties, could not be estimated at less than 1,000,000*l*. For the volunteers, the Honourable Gentleman had just said, that the estimate for the ensuing year must be 700,000*l*; and, therefore, for the year now closed, in which, if some articles were less, others were considerably greater, could not, he conceived, be less than 1,000,000*l*. This, as the sum advanced by government to that object; to which, if he was to add, as undoubtedly he must add, the part contributed by individuals, he certainly should be within the mark, when he stated the whole expense incurred for volunteers at not less than 2,000,000*l*.

Here, then, was a sum of at least 3,000,000*l*. expended in little more than the mere *creation* of a force; and that in a way, for the greater part of it, infinitely more oppressive than if raised by a general tax. What then, they were to ask, was the force *created*? And upon this occasion the statement of the Honourable Gentleman had something very grand and imposing, perfectly in the style of many statements, which were heard in that House. The safety of the country was provided for, it might be said, by a vast mass of armed force amounting to not less than 500,000 men. He was far from sure that the numbers might not even exceed these limits. But, of course, it was not to be supposed, that they were to take this statement merely as it stood in words, without inquiring a little, what this mass, this fabric consisted of; how much of it was of solid masonry, part of the old standing force of the country; how much was of a later date and less regular construction; how much might be composed of materials still more

recently collected, and more hastily put together, and be liable, in consequence, to various cracks and settlements; and what portion of it was mere lath and plaster, not distinguishable, perhaps, by the eye, and seeming to be a continuation of the same front, but no more the same with it in reality, than one of the new temporary barracks, of which they might expect to hear so much soon, was to be considered as a building of the same sort with St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey. It would be found, upon examination, and when this great edifice came to be properly surveyed, that a very small part, indeed, was regular army; that a large portion of it was militia; that another less considerable part was army of reserve; but that three-fourths of the whole was the mere levy in mass, moulded into the form, and known under the title of, volunteer corps. This was not what would have been understood, at least without explanation, in a report of the force of France, or Austria, or Prussia, or any other military power. Of the two first descriptions of force here enumerated, it was not necessary to say much. The regular army was what they had always known the regular army to be, and never more known it to be, than during the whole of the period of the late war. The militia had long been wrought to a high degree of excellence, and was at that time perhaps in as great perfection as it was possible for troops to attain, of whom neither officers nor men could have the benefit of actual service. Of the army of reserve the character must be for some time continually changing, according to their progress in training, and according to the manner in which the men were disposed of, either as selected, and incorporated into old battalions; making, however, a very incommodious mixture of men serving upon different tenures; or as put together in battalions by themselves. But in neither way could they be considered, for some time at least, as fit to be classed with the regular troops; nor would it be possible at any time for those so to class them, who refused to admit to the description of a soldier, any man whose engagement of service did not extend to term of life. It would be curious, indeed, if those who resisted most pertinaciously, and at the hazard even of having no army, every attempt to change the service of the line from life to term of years, should now find out that soldiers serving both for term of years and for service within the realm only, were entitled to reckon as part of the regular army. But a great portion of these were, for the present, good for no service either without or within the realm. They were men newly collected together with their pockets full of money, or who had only emptied them by a continued course of intoxication, and had not yet got their grass-flesh off, had not got the beer out of their bellies which they had been swilling for weeks, many of

them at the rate of fifty guineas a man. As for those who were left behind in what were called the reserved battalions, they, for the most part, were so left behind and reserved, because no one thought it worth his while to take them, and were of a sort which no time or drilling could ever render serviceable; time, indeed, being with many of them the last thing wanted, as the very objection to be urged was, that they were already past the age of service. The last and most important, certainly the most extensive head of force, was that which comprised the great body of inhabitants to whom arms had been given or promised, the general collection of the volunteer corps. In speaking of these bodies, it was as well, perhaps, to attempt, though the attempt was sure to be fruitless, to obviate the misrepresentation, which, he was aware, was lying in wait, to seize upon every word he should utter, (which "hush'd in grim repose expects his evening prey,") by observing, that what he had to condemn in these institutions was not the individuals, but the system: that in speaking of a body of 400,000 men, he certainly did not mean to say that they were all useless, or worthless, or of a character he knew not what, that was to make them run away at the sight of an enemy. He certainly should not be inclined to say this of any 400,000 men, taken at random from among the inhabitants of this country, and must necessarily be less inclined to say so, of a body which, from the manner of its being combined, must contain a greater proportion of the zeal, spirit, youth, courage, and patriotism of the country, than any other of equal numbers taken without rule or selection. To impute, therefore, to any one a purpose of censuring the volunteers individually, was too childish to be deserving of notice. As little could he intend to say, that the body of volunteers, as at present constituted, were of no use. Four hundred thousand men with arms in their hands, and consisting, for the most part, of persons within certain ages, could not be so combined, as not to be capable of being useful. All that he meant to say was, that these corps must be forever unsuited to the sort of service on which it was intended to employ them; and that the methods pursued with them were calculated to render them as little useful as it was possible for such an assemblage of men to be. The idea was, as had been long foreseen, and long deprecated, to combine these into companies, regiments, and brigades, and to endeavour to make regular soldiers of them. He was of opinion that you never could make regular soldiers of them; and that the attempt to do so was founded, in every respect, upon false views, both of the nature of those corps and of the military service in general. He grounded this opinion upon circumstances, certainly having nothing injurious in them to the characters of persons acting in volunteer corps. It was no re-

proach to any one, that he was of an age, or size, or state of health, that did not admit of his performing the duties of a soldier; that he was the father of a family, and could not be spared from the care and superintendence of those who looked to him at every moment as their protector and guide; that he was engaged in a business which he could not leave without ruin, and without ruin to those whom it was his duty to support. There was no reproach in all this, but there was a great deal in it, which must prevent corps, consisting, for the most part, of men so circumstanced, from either performing, for any length of time, the duties of soldiers employed on service, or from acquiring the expertness and habits by which those duties must be performed. These were truths which would not, probably, be much disputed. All the world would agree, that to talk of giving to citizens and householders ("to resiant inhabitants paying scot or lot,") to men engaged in professions and callings, who were compelled to live on one spot, were tied down by the care of families, who rejected military control, were serving without pay, were officered in a great measure by persons of their own description if not of their own choosing—that to talk of giving to such men the character and qualities of regular soldiers, was the greatest of all absurdities. Yet this, which every one would agree in, which no one would be hardy enough to deny, was the utmost that had ever been said, in disparagement, as it was called, of the volunteers. All the rest was a mere military question, by which the volunteers were not at all affected. Once admit that collections of men, such as he had just described, were not capable of being formed into regular regiments, that is to say, regiments possessing the properties which were looked for in troops of the line, and it then became a question, to be decided on general military principles, and in which the volunteers were no longer concerned, how far corps of a certain acknowledged inferiority ought to be employed in certain services, or to be placed in certain situations.

And here a great mistake seemed to prevail of supposing, that whatever possessed in itself a certain degree of force, or strength, must, by its addition to any thing of the same description, produce a degree of force, more than would be found in either of the parts separately: that strength added to strength, would always produce strength. This was evidently not so. If the addition supposed was not judiciously made, weakness, instead of strength, might be the consequence. No one could doubt that a regiment of four or five hundred men, volunteers or others, must possess some power of annoying an enemy. But was it sure that your line would be strengthened, and your general power of annoying and defeating the enemy be increased by such addition? He would take an example from a profession with

which the House and he were, in general, probably less acquainted than they were even with military affairs, but which might happen to be more familiar to them in this particular view. What was the reason that in naval actions, frigates, and even fifty-gun ships, were not suffered to make part of the line? Was it, that fifty-gun ships, or even frigates, were of no force? That their balls did not hit hard? That some of their guns were not even heavier than a part of those which formed the battery of a ship of the line? By no means. It was, he must conclude, because a line of battle at sea was a species of machine so constructed, as to require a certain proportionate strength in all its parts, the failure of any one of which would draw after it the failure of all the rest. The same was the case with an army. *There* also was a line, and which, as might be collected from the very expression of "regiments of the line," could be formed only of troops trained to a certain degree of discipline and regularity. To form it otherwise, to put into the line corps which, from want of experience or instruction, might not maintain the part of the action allotted to them, would not only be to endanger the whole by that particular failure, but might, in a thousand other ways, embarrass the operations of an army, and defeat the plans of a commander. Manœuvres must be calculated upon supposed qualifications in the troops and officers, who are to execute them. What must be the situation of a general, if, when directing the execution of any pressing service—a hill, suppose, to be occupied, a post to be maintained, a wood to be defended, a redoubt to be stormed—in a crisis which left no leisure for deliberation or inquiry, he must be comparing the characters of the different corps under his command, and be exposed, at last, to the uncertainties of troops, whose composition was unknown, whose conduct in a day of action was to be tried for the first time, and who, in the mode of service now proposed for them, might involve, in their defeat or miscarriage, the discomfiture of the whole army. These were not objections to volunteers in general: so far from it, that he, on the contrary, had always contended for them, to a far greater extent, though on a far less expensive footing, than that on which they were now established. His objections went only to volunteers, moulded into the forms and destined for the sort of service which government had now assigned them. It was government which had given them this most false direction; which, by dressing them in red coats, had betrayed, at once, the character in which they meant to consider them, and the use they meant to put them to,—a use for which they could never be made fit. This was the point on which he wished to insist. Other objections to the present system he should not now dwell upon; nor consider what might be the future danger arising to the state from bodies

of armed men, subject to no regular authority, governed by committees and sub-committees, and having more the character of debating societies, than of schools of military discipline. He was considering them merely as part of the defence of the country against a foreign enemy, and, in this view, he must recall to the attention of the House—first, the immense reduction to be made in our force, when, out of *five* or *six* hundred thousand, *four* were understood not to be soldiers, but only armed inhabitants; and next, when these armed inhabitants were prepared and fashioned in a manner so little judicious, as in the plan now pursued. When to this was added, that by the exemptions given, contrary to the intentions of ministry, and by the mere effect of haste and oversight, numbers had latterly flocked into these corps, as a refuge from other service, and that so large a portion of the active population of the country was thereby locked up, and withdrawn from the service either of the army of reserve or militia (the regular recruiting was out of the question;) he would leave to the House to judge what credit was to be given to the Honourable Gentlemen on this head of the account. The whole return, the whole force produced by the Honourable Gentlemen, after three millions expended, and with the command of an unlimited credit, was first 400,000 volunteers, such as he had described, and whose formation operated, as he had described, in respect to the other services; secondly, a militia, excellent in its kind, but incomplete, and rendered more difficult to be completed by the effect of the measure above referred to; thirdly, twenty, or six and twenty thousand army of reserve; fourthly and lastly, an addition (as he should have said,) of 5000, or (as he now understood from the Honourable Gentlemen) of 7000 men to the regular army! This was all that the Honourable Gentlemen had produced at the end of nine months, and as the fruit of all their labour and travail. This was all that the nation had got, in return for its large contributions, its ready sacrifices, its heavy expense, both of patience and money. Five, or seven thousand men to the regular army, five or seven pints of reasonably good soup, was the whole that these state-cooks had been able to produce, after all their simmerings and boilings, all the hams and chickens, and pounds of beef, which they had melted down, and the bills which they had run up in consequence, at the different shops.

Thus far he had gone in considering what a great philosopher of old would have called the *living* instruments of our defence. The *inanimate* instruments must not be overlooked, though he should say but little to all the objects which that class would comprise, such as works, fortresses, preparations by sea and land, every thing in short that wisdom and foresight could provide or

could arrange, towards making the approach of an enemy difficult, or giving force and efficacy to the action of those who were preparing to resist him. In all this he feared a dreadful deficiency. Much as might be wanting in living means, the want of judgment and ability in the application of those means, the want of a presiding mind either to create resources, or to turn to account those already existing, was, he feared, not less conspicuous. He would not attempt to enter into a criticism either upon the general distribution of the forces, which so far as it was built upon a system of concentration, or of collecting the force into great masses, for the protection of vital parts, he certainly approved, nor would he offer any opinion as to the considerable works going on at Chelmsford and Chatham, having, in fact, no opinion to offer. He would touch upon one point only of that sort, and that, not so much with a view of stating what he thought ought to be done, as of remarking on what *was* done, and upon the dreadful weakness and inconclusiveness of many of those reasonings, which governed the conduct of the country, in points where its very existence was at stake. From the northernmost point on the coast of Suffolk, where the protection might be supposed to cease from the shipping of Yarmouth, to a part of the coast of Essex, where a naval defence of another kind might be supposed to begin (and where he hoped it had at length begun, though, very late in the year, it certainly had not made its appearance); there was a line of coast accessible in most weathers, and certainly very commodious for the landing of an enemy in such vessels as those in which they were expected to come. Upon this line he should unquestionably think it highly advantageous if a defence were provided, formed by the construction of what were known to our officers under the name of Martello Towers, a species of edifice so called from a memorable instance of one at Martello in Corsica; where, by a tower of this sort, garrisoned by some ten or a dozen men, and mounted with about two guns, a ship of the line of ours, and a frigate, were, during the last war, completely foiled and driven off, though they were able to approach within a quarter of a mile of the object, and though the Captain, a most approved officer, would not withdraw from the contest while there was a hope of success left, nor till he had lost an immense number of his men, and had had his ship twice set on fire. No one would pretend to say, that towers of this sort would not produce a great effect upon an enemy, whoever he might be, that came within the reach of their guns. That they would stop the disembarkation of infantry, he was not prepared to say. On the contrary, he was of opinion that they would not. Great as the loss might be, the enemy, if determined, would still accomplish object. But would the same be the case with artillery and

horses? And would not the slaughter be immense, and the delay most important, were it possible that under such a fire a disembarkation of that sort could after all take place? The objection, therefore, to such defences must resolve itself into the consideration of expense, or into that of the force which it would lock up, and the means which would be furnished to the enemy, should the fortresses in question finally fall into his hands. As to the latter objection, he had already stated, what the contents of such towers were, and what the loss would be to those from whom they should be taken, viz. a dozen men at the utmost, and a couple of guns. The value to the enemy would be none; for the guns would never be transportable; and certainly not the towers; and neither would be of any use to him in the places where they were. But their uselessness to the enemy it was unnecessary to prove, as it was hardly possible that they should fall into his hands. It was of the nature of these little fortresses (quite the reverse of what was the case with redoubts), that they were equally impregnable to cannon and to musquetry, and could not be taken but by such means as the enemy would neither have time nor inclination to employ. The whole question, therefore, was a question of expense: and what would that expense be, incurred once for all, compared with the maintenance of such a living force, (supposing even that we had the force, and could spare it for that purpose,) as would give to any tract of coast the same security which would be derived from the defence in question? Considering the simplicity of the construction of these towers, the little interior fitting they would require, the rude materials of which they might be composed, (the stones made use of for paving London, might serve for the most expensive part,) the facility with which materials would be conveyed for buildings necessarily situated on the edge of the coast, and in its most accessible parts, it is difficult to conceive, that 1000*l*. apiece must not be an ample allowance. And thus for a sum of 30,000*l*. and with a force of 300 men, thirty miles of the coast, in parts the most vulnerable, would be put in a state of security far greater at least than any which they could enjoy without the aid of such precautionary measures. But let the House consider what happened without this. To supply the place of these despised towers, the coast was lined with sea-fencibles, armed with pikes, a weapon which had been said, if he recollected right, in some of the circular official papers, to be capable of great effect in the hands of a Briton, fighting for every thing that was dear to him. He wished the House to reflect, what would be the situation of these pike-men, at Aldborough for instance, one of the places where there was a corps of that sort, and which was situated on the part of the coast to which he had been alluding. Here was a straight shore with deep water, and

a beach, on which in moderate weather vessels might run with confidence, without even shortening sail: and in these circumstances it was supposed, that when vessels should thus arrive, containing each a hundred soldiers, and carrying a four-and-twenty pounder on its bow, men were to stand on the shore with their pikes, and push them off! Was this the idea of a bold Briton? or was it the idea of master Fribble? "Begone, fellow." You might as well suppose, that the enemy was to be kept off by bodkins or knitting-needles!

It was certainly not by a force of this sort, that the coast could be defended. The great argument, indeed, was, that it could not be defended at all, and that therefore no defence should be attempted. And here he wished to recall the attention of the House to that loose, vague, inconsiderate style of reasoning, to which he had before alluded, and to which, it was melancholy to think, the very life and being of the state was sometimes entrusted. When a proposal was made, for securing a part of the coast by works, as happened in the case of an honourable friend behind him (Colonel Craufurd), the answer universally made was, that you could not fortify *every* part of the coast; and thence it was meant to be inferred, that it was useless to fortify *any*. But what was the sort of reasoning that could lead to such a conclusion? In many cases, he was ready to allow, that an argument to that effect would be just. If the question was of shutting mice out of a pantry, the conclusion would be correct, that to stop up one hole was useless, while any other was suffered to remain open. The strength of a chain, according to an old observation, was the strength of the weakest link. To fortify those above it, was useless: to add to the strength of those below it, might be injurious, as well as useless; because, without adding to the general strength, you might add something to the weight. But where any one to apply that same reasoning to a chain in a figurative sense, to a chain of posts, nothing could be more false and inconclusive. It is not here as in the other case, that the force applied acted through every part. The force acted only on the part to which it was applied, and if that part happened to be the strongest, would be resisted with the power of the strongest. It was true, that if the enemy knew your weak point, and could be sure of carrying his attack there, all that he was arguing against, must be admitted. But would any one maintain, that such was the fact? Was this, what they heard on other occasions? When the danger of invasion was in discussion, how were those laughed to scorn, who seemed to reason upon the idea, that the enemy, once embarked, could say either where he should, or where he should not, touch the land? How much of our confidence was founded, and justly founded, on the uncertainty which belongs to all the

enemy's operations, and in the impossibility of his fixing with certainty the point in which his descent must be made? Yet here the tables were suddenly turned; and to attempt to secure any part of the coast, while another was left unguarded, was treated as trifling and childish; because the enemy would be sure to choose what was weakest, and must be able to guide his armament with perfect precision to the part, whatever it was, that he should choose. He urged this topic, with a view to expose the sort of reasoning, which was admitted often into concerns of the greatest importance, and might prevail possibly at the present moment in questions more critical and more certain, than that which he had brought forward respecting the coast of Suffolk.

There was, in fact, no security anywhere, with persons so wholly unsuited to the arduous crisis in which they had to act, as the Honourable Gentlemen. In every part of their system little considerations were mixing themselves with great, so as to spoil the effect of the whole, and prevent its working truly in any of its operations. This was eminently the case in the pecuniary part, where a wild profusion was so combined with a mean parsimony, that it was like the conduct of a man, who in giving a great entertainment with all the dainties of the season, peas at a guinea a quart, should suffer the whole to be spoilt at last by a want of bread or salt. With this must be coupled, as it possibly arose out of it, an extraordinary passion for machinery, into which the Honourable Gentlemen had been led, partly, as it appeared, by the hope of working cheaper, and partly by that common error, of supposing that a great machine must be calculated to produce a great effect. Their machines were much like that which Hogarth represents, where the wedge, the lever, the axis *in peritrochio*, all the mechanical powers, were introduced for the purpose of drawing a cork, an operation which a waiter or a butler would perform more effectually, as well as more expeditiously, by a little instrument from his pocket called a cork-screw. It was of the nature of all machinery, that in proportion as the parts were complicated, the movement was likely to be slow; not to mention that if any part should happen to be misplaced, or wanting, or ill-adjusted, the whole must be at a stand. This was very much the case with some of the machines of the Honourable Gentlemen. In order to keep their expenses out of sight, and to throw as much as possible upon individuals without the intervention of Parliament, they had set up their grand system of lord-lieutenants, deputy-lieutenants, lieutenants of division, inspectors of divisions, superintendants of parishes, &c. &c. persons very proper to be appointed, and to be held in readiness, but very improper for much of the work on which they were to be employed, namely, that of getting the country into a state of military defence. Of all the instru-

ments to work with for such a purpose, the worst, surely, that could be devised, was that of a deputy-lieutenant's meeting. Every one had heard frequently, and most proverbially, of the slow progress of official business. But at what rate must that business proceed, which had for its office a county? Which, instead of clerks, with salaries, amenable to superiors, and compellable to a certain attendance, was transacted by country-gentlemen, subject to no authority, who were bound by no especial duty, who might attend as much or as little as they liked, and who might feel possibly that they conferred a favour every time that they attended at all? Offices too, in which Government business was transacted, were open commonly every day, and for many hours each day. But what must be the condition of that office, whose days of attendance were one in a week, and whose office-hours were about three in each of those days? This office was likewise a *corresponding* office: but what must be the activity of that correspondence, where between the letter and its answer the least interval known was a week? He took no notice here of the manner in which at such meetings business must necessarily be conducted, where few possibly had given much attention to the object in question, where no one had any right to prescribe to the rest, where many would come more to talk of their own private business or to meet those they were in quest of, than to promote the business under discussion, where most were impatient to be gone, where all had voices, and, what was possibly not the least evil, where every one had a right to declare that voice at as great length as he thought proper.

He could not better illustrate the effects of the system which had thrown business into this course, than by stating what had happened upon the subject of signals. It might have been thought, that the arranging a system of signals, as it must have been among the earliest and most pressing objects of attention, that which, in some sort, was to give effect to every thing else, was the one also which would have been most easily accomplished, and most speedily carried into execution. The mode that had been adopted, was, too, of the most simple kind. A line of stations was to be established along the coast, placed under the direction of persons appointed by the Admiralty, and qualified to collect and to convey, by means of the Admiralty signals, such more detailed intelligence as was necessary for officers appearing off the coast, or commanding at the naval stations; while from this, as from a circumference, other lines were drawn inland, for the mere purpose of giving alarm, or for communicating a few of the more simple results of what had been observed upon the coast. Any one would suppose that this was a work, which would not take long in completing; considering that it was of that sort,

which might be going on in all places at once, so that the time for the whole would be no more than that of the latest of the parts; and that in three weeks or a month from the first alarm, that is, from the 8th of March, however much our means of resistance might have been wanting, we should at least not have been liable to see the enemy amongst us without notice of his approach. And so it would have been with any set of persons, who would have done things in a plain way; who would have been content "to draw a cork with a cork-screw." But not so the savers of money, and the lovers of machinery. By seeking to divide the expense of these signals with the counties, and throwing the business, in consequence, into the train which he had described, the result was (the House would hear it with astonishment) that in some of the maritime counties, immediately exposed to the enemy, and where the attack was most expected, the system of signals, even in those parts of it which were most essential, and on which the whole depended, was not completed to that very hour. It would naturally be enquired, how this could happen; and the explanation might be given, by stating only what had taken place in the county to which he belonged. When the deputy-lieutenants signified to the lieutenant of division, that stations must be prepared for the reception of the naval officers; the lieutenant of division did not care to stir in the business, till he knew whether the sums which he should advance, would be repaid to him by the deputy-lieutenants. The deputy-lieutenants, on the other hand, were a little shy of engaging for this money, till they should know, whether they could make it good from the county: and, on the part of the county, it was quickly replied, that the lieutenants would look in vain for repayment there: for that the sums in question were no article for a county rate, and in no county rate should they be admitted. Here the matter hung for some time, and here it might have hung still longer, if the deputy-lieutenants, weary of this slow return of correspondence, and impatient of further delay in a matter so important and urgent, had not resolved to take the risk upon themselves, and to direct the completion of the work, trusting that government would see them finally repaid. This, Government had engaged to do; and the county of Norfolk might by that time, perhaps, be in possession of its signals. But by whose fault had it happened, that it was not in possession of them sooner? It must fairly be said, not by the fault of any one. The striking feature of the case was, that with so great a delay, and such a succession of persons, no one could be found to whom the delay was imputable. The lieutenant of division could not be blamed, for not being willing to advance his money, till he knew by whom he was to be repaid. The deputy-lieutenants might well have been justified, had they

persisted in refusing to the last, to take upon themselves an expense which they had no means of recovering from the county. The county was well warranted in insisting that this charge was one, which was incurred for the general safety, and which ought to be defrayed by a general tax. The Admiralty were not to blame for delaying to send officers, and commence the expenses of their establishment, till they should know that houses were ready to receive them.—But this successive justification of all the parties concerned in the measure, was the most complete condemnation of the system to which it belonged. What must that system of proceeding be, in which, when every party under it had done his duty, nine months could elapse, before the maritime counties were furnished with their establishment of signals?

With this example he might safely close his account of the conduct of the Honourable Gentlemen as persons fit to direct the energies, and call out the resources of the country, at a crisis like the present. The instance itself, as a circumstance in the situation of the country, was now of no great importance; as it might be hoped, that by this time, or at least in about a month more, the evil was, or would be, at an end, and the maritime counties be prepared with their signals. But it was not so with the state of the army, and of the military force of the country. Here was not only a great misconduct, but a great national evil and danger, present and future. The Honourable Gentlemen had not only not provided an army, but had brought things to a state, in which, without some great change, it was impossible that an army should be provided. The army of reserve, the only channel of recruiting not yet dry, would soon, possibly, be dry likewise. It had yielded 7000 men: it was doubtful how many more it had to yield. Whatever it gave to the army, was so much in diminution of its own numbers. How much might continue to ooze from it, in its decreased and decreasing state, was very uncertain; not to mention the dreadful expense and ruinous example of those successive enrolments—this double bounty. At all events the supply, in this way, had necessarily a termination. It was an artificial, not a natural cascade. As a supply, it must at last run out. When recruits should have entered from this army, equal to the original numbers, the measure was at an end. The army of reserve, therefore, could not be looked upon as a permanent mode of recruiting and reinforcing the army; and, in the meanwhile, by this and their other measures, ministers had laid the foundation of such difficulties, as would render it nearly impossible that any such mode should be devised in future. The probability was, that after yielding to the army a few more thousands, so much would just remain of the army of reserve, as would be sufficient to preserve the example of this anomalous force, and to make recruiting im-

possible by contributing, with the militia, to continue the high rate of bounties.

In aid of all these mischiefs came the effect of the volunteer system, which, as the Honourable Gentlemen had managed it, whether by design or by mistake, locked up 400,000 men of the active population of the country. What a blow was here! He was tempted to call out to the Honourable Gentlemen, as the Roman Emperor did to his General, *Redde mihi, Vare, legiones*. Seventy thousand men and more, withdrawn from the supply of the army of reserve, by the militia; and 400,000 men withdrawn from both militia and army of reserve by the volunteers; and the army of reserve, the only source for recruiting the army; with what sort of men, and at what rate of recruiting, was the army likely to be supplied?

All this as a future consideration, the Honourable Gentlemen thought nothing of. They had got, or thought they had got (they had in fact got no such thing), what was sufficient for present defence; and, beyond that, they never thought of looking. Defence was their utmost horizon. All beyond was clouds and darkness. But to those, who did not wish to bound their views merely by that consideration, who thought that if the country *was* to exist, after the present dangers, it was of some consequence to consider what that existence was to be; to such persons it would be a matter of anxiety to know, how the country was to proceed without the use of a disposable force, and if such a force should appear necessary or desirable, in what manner it was to be obtained.

His ideas upon this subject had long since been declared, and he had not been able, by any subsequent reflection or inquiry, to get beyond the notions which he had at first formed. His opinion had been, and was, that, as a first step, there should be an universal abolition of the system of substitution. That all commutation for personal service (as commutation there must be) should be made by fixed fine, so as to render government the only recruiter in the market, without competition from militia, army of reserve, or any other service. That to meet, and co-operate with the effects of the advantage thus given, service, in the army, should be changed from life to term of years; drafting should be formally abolished; means possibly devised to render service in the West Indies less frequently necessary, and some other subordinate regulations adopted, calculated to give to the profession of a soldier advantages and attractions, additional to those, not inconsiderable ones, which it already had. With these things done, he was of opinion, that the condition of the country was not so changed, either as to the wealth or inclinations of the lower orders of its inhabitants,

as to make it impossible, that, upon a greatly increased population, the army should be recruited as in former times. He was by no means sure, that if these methods had been adopted at the time when they were first suggested (and still more if they had been adopted at a period somewhat earlier), the army would not have been recruited, and the general defence of the country increased, even at this moment, far beyond what it had been by the boasted measure of the army of reserve. That it would be so in the end, there could not be the smallest doubt. In a comparison of these measures, the same distinction must be observed, as gentlemen, accustomed to planting, knew how to make between a sown and a planted tree: though the latter would have the advantage at the beginning, and it might be, for some few years, it was known which would outstrip the other at the long-run.

But should the danger at any moment be such, as not to wait the gradual progress of recruiting, however successful; or should the general success of recruiting, even in the new circumstances proposed, be less than he was willing to imagine, it would be then open to have recourse to compulsory measures; but measures so chosen (that is to say, of which the abolition of substitution should make part), as to become a powerful *stimulus* to recruiting, instead of presenting any impediment to it. He was as little a friend to compulsory measures, where they could be avoided, as any other gentleman: but he would not court popularity, nor discredit his own judgment, by decrying them as unconstitutional. He had shown, on a former occasion, together with several of his Honourable Friends, that so far from objecting factiously to any measure of government, or lying in wait to raise a cry against the Honourable Gentlemen, he was more ready than they had seemed to be, to brave that cry, in support of any measure of the sort alluded to, which the circumstances of the times might render necessary.—These were his ideas of the measures to be adopted, for creating that first and most indispensable requisite in the present state of the world, as well for the sake of immediate safety, as with a view to the future condition of the empire,—a regular and disposable military force. Instead of this, the Honourable Gentlemen seemed by their measures to be looking to any other force, rather than that of a regular army, the augmentation to which was as yet, by their own account, only 7000 men; while by their general conduct they had brought the country to a state, in which, at the end of nine months, a line of cruisers, or (according to the expression of an old poet, whom he did not dare to quote in the original) “a single plank,” was all that protected the country, he would not say, from the “grave,” but from evils and dangers, of a magnitude not to be described.

Mr. Windham was replied to by Mr. Yorke (Secretary of State for the Home Department). Mr. Pitt recommended a further application of 500,000*l.* to the Volunteer Service, in order to render it more efficient, by increasing the number of drills, and attaching a regular field-officer and adjutant to each battalion. Mr. T. Grenville and Mr. Fox concurred with Mr. Windham, and were answered by Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Addington (Chancellor of the Exchequer); after which the several resolutions on the estimates were put, and carried without a division.

ADDITIONAL FORCE BILL.

JUNE 5th, 1804.

MR. PITT, Chancellor of the Exchequer, laid before the house his plan for maintaining an Additional Force. Under this plan, the Army of Reserve and Militia were to be completed to their establishments; after which the latter force was to be reduced to 40,000 men, by transfers to the Regular Army; and vacancies thus occasioned were to be supplied by further levies. The men were to be raised by ballot in the first instance, but if the person drawn should decline to serve, he should be allowed to fine, and the ballot should go on;—and if no person should be found willing to serve, then the parish should be bound to provide the quota allotted to it, taking care, however, that no higher bounty should be given than was already fixed by law. This recruiting to take place under the direction of the parish officers. If men could not be found by them, the parish should be fined; the fines carried to the general recruiting account, and the commanding officer of the district be empowered to raise the deficiencies by means of regular recruiting, paying the same bounties to the men thus raised as the parishes would have done. Mr. Pitt having stated the nature of his plan, and moved for leave to bring in a bill accordingly,

MR. WINDHAM rose, and spoke to the following effect:

I perfectly concur with the ideas of my Right Honourable Friend, so far as they regard the necessity of increasing our regular army, but I cannot help thinking, that the means which he proposes for that purpose, are very far from being likely to prove effectual. His plan, in this respect, resembles too closely the measures which have been pursued for some time past in this country. In many respects I confess that it differs from, and is much superior to, that hitherto acted upon. It is, notwithstanding, liable to considerable objections.

Upon subjects of this kind nothing is more natural than that there should be differences of opinion. The plan proposed this evening is very different from that which was announced by my Right Honourable Friend some time since. This serves to show, that even within a short space of time my Right Honourable Friend himself has changed his mind upon the nature of his own project; and unless he can change his mind still further upon this question, I can hardly flatter myself that I shall be able to support him. Indeed, I much fear that our sentiments are fundamentally different, and that I must be one of those who will be compelled to resist the project which he has to offer. What the points are

on which I must oppose it, I may more particularly explain upon a future occasion. At present I shall only state, and with as much brevity as I can, the general fundamental principles which urge me to refuse my concurrence to some parts of this proposition. I say some, because there are many parts, which to resist would be to resist myself—would be inconsistent with the sentiments I have repeatedly delivered in this house, and which I hold at present. I mean that particularly which relates to the reduction of the militia. This is an idea which I threw out long since, and which I must be proud to find seconded by the authority of my Right Honourable Friend. Although it must be recollected, that when first mentioned it was very much censured, yet now it appears to be generally recognised as a wise and eligible expedient. Another point of the plan of which I approve is, the rejection of the principle of substitution. I should have been very glad to have got rid of this principle upon the condition of commuting service for a fixed fine; in which way certainly the evils of exorbitant bounties would have been avoided; but I am much better satisfied to have compulsory service put an end to altogether. Both of these alterations therefore, namely, the reduction in the amount of the militia, and the abolition of compulsory service, I heartily approve of, and either expressly or by implication have long since recommended. I am also happy to understand, from my Right Honourable Friend at the close of his speech, that it is his intention to bring forward a motion for a change in the condition of service in our regular army, by which I conceive him to mean, that men shall be enlisted for a certain term of years in lieu of the present custom. This, I think, and have always thought, a thing so desirable, that it was my determination, if it had not been taken up by any other member, to submit the question to the consideration of this house. I am glad to find that the idea seems to be adopted by an Honourable Gentleman who is so capable, from his situation and ability, of carrying it into effect.

Having stated those parts of my Right Honourable Friend's intentions of which I approve, I now come to the less pleasant part of my duty, that of stating the points of which I disapprove. In the whole of the proposed proceeding for raising men, there is introduced an injudicious mixture of the voluntary and the compulsory, of which the latter strikes me to be much too strong. This was one motive of my resistance to the army of reserve bill, the principle of which is preserved in the plan under discussion; and I remember, that in the course of the arguments offered in favour of that bill, the principal ground relied upon by its advocates was, that it would go to raise a body within a short time, more effectually than could be done by any other method. This argument, as to expedition, which was founded on the circum-

stances of the moment, and which was made to overcome every consideration of future advantage, cannot be used with any effect now. We now find ourselves in a state, in which what is called present emergency, can no longer operate to remove from our minds what is due to the consideration of consequences which may take place at subsequent periods. We are not now called upon to consult for the present only. We are at least in circumstances in which we have a little pause and breathing: time to consider what is good for the country permanently, as well as for the present moment. If we were not, the plan proposed by my Right Honourable Friend, must be given up altogether, for with a view to present defence it does not promise to effect any thing. On the other hand, its provisions are, as I before observed, in a very considerable degree compulsory. If the danger to be guarded against were imminent, and that a levy were necessary immediately, unquestionably a compulsory proceeding to obtain that levy might be the most effectual. Measures of that sort are undoubtedly in their own nature the speediest and most certain in their operation. Nothing seems to be so sure and direct in a case where men are wanted, as to pass a law, by which men shall be forcibly taken. But here care is necessary, to consider the nature and constitution of the country in which such powers are to be exercised. What is good for Russia or Prussia may not be good for Great Britain. It is not that the power of enacting such laws is wanting in Great Britain. In every country, free or otherwise, there is a power that is supreme; and that supreme power must, by the very description and name of it, be capable of enacting whatever laws it pleases. Whatever the King does in Prussia, or the Emperor in Russia, or the Grand Turk in Constantinople, or, what is still more, the Emperor of the Gauls in France, that may the King, Lords, and Commons, legally, enact in Great Britain. But the question then comes not merely as to the propriety of such enactments, but as to the means of carrying them into execution, and according to those means will be the advantage that is to be expected from the measure. In a free country, therefore, in a country like this, where nothing is to be done but by regular authority, where every thing must be conducted according to law and even according to usage, where there must be a constant regard, not only to men's rights, but even to their feelings, measures of compulsion will often fail of their effect, and show themselves to be ill-chosen, when the same measures, in countries of a different description, would be confessedly the most advantageous and judicious. Where the constitution of things is such, that the power of the state can go straight to its object; where the sovereign, as in Russia, or as in old times in this country, can call upon his great lords, and they again can call upon their vassals; where,

as in Prussia possibly, he can send forth his recruiters, and with little ceremony take whatever men are fitted to his purpose, there compulsory measures, as they are unquestionably the most simple, so they probably are the most certain and efficacious: but the reverse may possibly be the case, where they are to be loaded with all the restrictions, exceptions, provisions, and modifications, which must be charged upon them in this country. In such a complicated system of movements, half the power of the machine is lost in overcoming the friction.

These are the reasons why we must not conclude that a measure which is good in one country, must be equally or proportionably so in another. A country and constitution like this, is not good for measures of this description. Our compulsion is not good compulsion. It has not the strength and flavour of that which is the growth of more congenial climes. It would not follow necessarily, even if it had, that it would be equally beneficial with us as in other places. Inquiry must always be made, agreeably to what is the fact in the present instance, how the compulsory measure is likely to operate on measures of voluntary exertion that are to be going forward at the same time. Inquiry must likewise be made whether the voluntary measures will not render the compulsory unnecessary; for nobody, I suppose, wishes to have recourse to compulsory measures, if you can do without them.

In the present instance, it happens both that the compulsory part, as there is all reason to think, is unnecessary, the voluntary being sufficient without it; and that the voluntary will not be able to do its work, if the other is persisted in. All the parishes are to be called upon for a certain number of men, to enforce their production of which (so much is their inclination doubted) a fine is to be levied upon such as fail to furnish their complement within a certain time. It is understood also, that the militia is to be suffered gradually to waste itself to a certain number, and that this difference is to be made good by men raised, in succession, in the way proposed, and who are to be transferred to this new army of reserve; so that for the regular army, which is professed to be the main object in view, the stock which will be left for direct recruiting, will be those who remain after deducting the amount of the present militia.

A hope, however, is entertained (and this is the great strength of the measure) that men when once detached from their original habits, and engaged in military life, will enlist in great numbers, from the force thus to be created. The fallacy of the arguments which make the foundation of this hope is obvious, for it may quite as well happen, that after men have so far caught the military spirit, (or rather so far lost the civil one,) as to resolve to

continue soldiers, they should remain in the corps from which they derived this feeling, and continue on the home-service, as that they should enlist into regiments destined to serve abroad. If, however, some men should so enter, as it is presumed that many will, there is no reason to expect the number to be greater than will be necessary to compensate those, who, having originally been disposed to a military life, and being persons, who, if no such limited force had offered, would have engaged for general service, will now be satisfied with the experiment they have made, will have sown their wild oats, and either return to their former employments, or, at least, continue in that species of service in which they find themselves placed. I am not an advocate, therefore, for providing in greater abundance such species of force. I do not want to multiply the opportunities by which men, having a military turn and disposed to betake themselves to a soldier's life, may be drawn into services in which that propensity will be only half-indulged, and, in which, in quite as small a proportion, the public service will be promoted. I have the strongest objections to this new-fangled scheme of dividing our public force into two parts—of crippling that part which is disposable, and increasing that which is not, in the ill-grounded hope of providing, through the latter, an augmentation for the former. This is the modern, indirect, circuitous, and fallacious mode of recruiting the army.

It appears now, that the propriety of abandoning the balloting system is admitted, and, in lieu of a ballot, my Honourable Friend proposes to raise men in another way; he means to commit the recruiting to parish officers. I will not say that this is not an improvement compared to the mode pursued of late, which, besides being so grievously oppressive to individuals, interfered so materially with the supply of the regular army by high bounties, &c.; but yet I would not be understood to believe that the plan before the house, will not operate considerably in the same way. For although the amount of bounty to be paid by the parish officers is limited in form, we can have no security that that bounty will not be generally exceeded. Those officers could have no particular motive for economy, and they must have a strong wish to save their parishes from the proposed fine. This wish will naturally render them anxious to procure men, and ready, if necessary, to give an advanced bounty. From this, all the evils complained of under the army of reserve act respecting high bounties are, in their degrees, likely to recur; for no sum short of the fine will of course be scrupled, so as to avoid the penalty, by raising the complement of men. Some parishes may, from pride, even exceed the fine in the allowance of bounty, rather than not bring forward their quota.

A great deal has been said, now and upon former occasions, about the hopes to be formed from individual exertion; but this appears to me to be altogether imaginary. Nothing can be conceived more helpless than an unfortunate countryman, who, in the midst of his day's work, or at his return home tired in the evening, is told that a ballot has taken place, and that he is one of the unlucky number upon whom the lot has fallen. If he does not happen to be insured, by being a member of an association-club, he is as much struck down by the news, as he would be by a stroke of the apoplexy. His first resource is probably to vent his complaints among his neighbours; but finding that this is but of little avail, and being told by some one of a substitute that has been heard of in a parish not far distant, he sets out on his mission, roaming about, like *David Simple*, looking for a true friend. In this way he wanders on, from house to house, and from village to village, spending his money, losing his time, tiring his horse (or his neighbour's horse, as the case may be), filling the ale-houses with his complaints, but helping to empty them of their beer, till good fortune or good advice directs him to one of those obnoxious, but, in these cases, necessary personages, called a crimp. There, at least, his labour ends; and, by the help of some forty or fifty guineas, he is enabled to procure a recruit for the service, and an exemption for himself; at least, until the recruit shall happen to run away.

The same thing, with circumstances in a slight degree varying, must happen in the case of the parish officers. What means upon earth have the parish officers to get men, but those which they ought not to have? This, measure, therefore, which among its other professions, professes to abolish crimping, will go, if I am not mistaken, to extend and establish that system. I may almost say, it is to be hoped that it will; for if the parish officers do not supply themselves in that way, it is to be feared that they must have recourse to more exceptionable methods. What is the description of persons to whom they will first apply? and what will be the situation of any of those persons, should the application not be successful? A man dependent on the parish, or in a situation of life to be charged with petty offences, will not fare, it is to be apprehended, very well, should the officers and principal proprietors of the parish have deemed him a fit person to serve His Majesty, and he by chance not be disposed to concur in that opinion. Let him take care how he applies, on his own account, or that of any of his family, for parish relief; how he is seen after dusk stepping aside from the foot-path, near any of his worship's plantations. Without saying to what degree these powers will be abused, it is sufficient to know that the bill holds out the strongest temptation to such abuse; nay, that its very hopes of

success seem to be founded on that supposition: for if the parish officers are not to avail themselves of the powers which their office gives them, what advantages, I must again ask, have they for recruiting beyond what are possessed by all other men? For what purpose then, it is to be inquired, are these consequences incurred? for increasing the regular army? Not a man in the first instance is obtained for the regular army. All these compulsory means produce nothing but soldiers for home-service. To engage them afterwards for more valuable service, we depend on the operation of bounties. Our forcing-pumps will carry the water only to reservoirs of a certain height; from thence it must be removed, to the level at which it is wanted, by machinery of another kind.

The idea comes then to be considered, founded on the supposition that a force of this limited nature is to exist and to be made the instrument of recruiting the regular army,—of attaching particular regiments of one service to particular regiments of the other, so as to give to each regiment of the line a peculiar and appropriate source of recruiting, in the battalion of the army of reserve that is attached to it. From this arrangement great advantages are expected, such as we have heard set forth with all the embellishments of my Honourable Friend's eloquence. It is the great foundation on which our hopes of giving effect to the plan of a stationary force as a means of recruiting the regular army, are made to rest. But of this arrangement, it must be observed, that while it affects by its form to be something positive, and to confer powers not before possessed, it is, in truth, nothing but restriction and prohibition, principles merely negative, and by which, in the first instance, powers must always be taken away, instead of being given. When you say that all who shall enlist from the army of reserve shall enter severally into such and such regiments, it is the same as to say, they shall enter into no other,—a regulation of which the prohibitory part is far more extensive than the enacting, and which, in the first instance, therefore, is calculated rather to diminish the numbers of those who may enter than to increase them. There is little doubt that such will be its final effect. By establishing that connexion which this plan has in view, such a provincial character may, it is possible, be imprinted upon certain corps, as may create motives for entering into the service which would not otherwise exist, and by which men will be gained who would otherwise remain in the home-battalions, or would not enter the service at all. But against this must be set the chance that this provincial character will, in innumerable instances, never be established; and that when it is, it will not, by any means, produce effects equal to the disadvantage of the restriction, by which alone it can be brought about. To

make a corps provincial, you must secure to it exclusively the recruiting of the corresponding battalion; in other words, you must deny to the men of that battalion, the privilege of choosing the corps into which they would wish to enter. When you have done all this, such may be, from various causes, the necessity of supplying this corps from other quarters, of making good its losses by other means than those of its own recruiting fund, that its provincial character may be wholly lost, or, at least, but very imperfectly traced; and after all, it is to be considered what this character will do, estimating its effects according to the present state of society, and the motives which in general influence those who enter the army as soldiers. The bond of local or county connexion is far less strong than it was in this country forty or fifty years ago. A thousand motives will operate with men in the choice of a regiment more powerful than their attachment to the name of their county, or even than their desire of finding in the regiment those provincial properties which it may really possess. A man would be disposed to enter, but that the regiment to which he must now be confined is abroad, and he wants to stay at home; or is at home, and he is desirous of seeing the world, or has an ardour for service, and would wish to go abroad. The regiment is in Canada, or Nova Scotia, and he wishes to go to Gibraltar; is in a hot country, and he wishes for a cold one: or *vice versa*. For county connexion he cares nothing, having left the county when he was a boy; but by entering with the recruiting party now in town, he shall go where he may hope to see again his old sweetheart, Bet such-a-one, or be in a corps with the comrade with whom he worked in London, who is now a serjeant, and may have the means, perchance, of making him a corporal.

Such are the motives that dictate the choice of particular regiments among private soldiers; and, so far as they operate, this regulation will prove injurious. It will prove injurious, too, in the case of another class of men, be they more or less numerous, those whom my Right Honourable Friend has particularly dwelt on, with a view to the discipline which he hopes to establish in these second battalions. If, says he, a man by idleness or misconduct should incur the displeasure of his officers, he cannot hope to escape them or to secure impunity, by enlisting into the regular army. He will go into a corps where his character will be sure to accompany him, and where he will meet, or be followed by, those very officers to whom his good or ill conduct will be known. It is amazing that my Right Honourable Friend did not see, that this was a reason why he would not go into the corps at all, and not being at liberty to take any other, would remain to the end of his term where he was. In this instance therefore, at

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least, the regulation in question will not do much: whatever advantages it may have with respect to discipline, it will not advance much the recruiting for the regular army. I see on the whole nothing in this plan, for which so many fair promises have been made, that is likely to have any other effect than to produce a large stationary force to be confined to this country.

With respect to expense, considering that the measure does, in the first instance, fix the rate of bounty higher than has ever yet been known as paid by government, that the parishes will not be restrained within the rate so fixed, and that, whatever is ultimately given by the parishes, more must of necessity be given to men entering for general service, it will be impossible not to see, that in this view also, the measure must produce effects the most injurious, and that it holds a distinguished place in that system, which in less than forty years has raised the price of a recruit in this country from a guinea, to the enormous amount at which we now see it. Such have been the glorious fruits of a system of balloting, followed up by the principle of commuting personal service for service by substitute!

Much has been said by my Right Honourable Friend and others of the influence of a general military spirit in the country, and the propriety of promoting it. Upon this point I must say, that my opinion has always been, however paradoxical it may appear, that to put a nation in a state in which every man was a soldier, was not the way to make a military nation, or to carry the military strength of a country to its greatest height. A country in which every man is a soldier, is a country in which no man is a soldier. A system, such as is now proposed, would rather serve to damp and deaden than to encourage and animate the military spirit. It is a great mistake to suppose, that the military spirit of a country is cherished and kept alive by those only who appear in the military character themselves. The *un*-military part of the community contribute quite as much to this, and in a manner hardly less direct. They are the spectators or audience, without whom the piece would no more be performed than it would without the actors. We need go no further for a proof of this, than to inquire what the influence is, in promoting the military spirit, of that half of the community, which certainly takes no part in the service, namely, the women. In France formerly, a man would hardly have been spoken to, in the female world, who, not being engaged by some other profession, had passed his youth without service in the army. What more was necessary? A country in that state is a military country, let its military establishments be what they may. And the fact, in this instance, perfectly corresponds with the theory; for if we look round the world, it will be found that the military countries are not those in

which, by the constitution, every man is enrolled as a soldier; but the contrary. France, the most military country, has nothing but its army. Prussia, Russia, Austria, in like manner. Even Switzerland, if it may be considered as military, was not so in virtue of its militia, but in consequence of the number of its inhabitants who had served in foreign armies. On the other hand, in America, and in the little state of Geneva, if that may be reckoned, though neither certainly were considered as military states, every man was in some way or other a soldier. The reason of this is not difficult to be traced, and may be considered as twofold: first, states not much engaged in wars, and with whom, therefore, on this very account, the military spirit is not likely to run high, will resort to the system of militia, town guards, provincial enrolments, and other establishments of that sort, in which numbers are to make up for quality; and secondly, the very existence of such establishments, instead of exalting, will tend to abate whatever military feeling there might otherwise be. It can never be of advantage to that feeling to familiarize men to the contemplation of soldiers separated from those conditions which make the character respectable. An army merely defensive, and that can from the nature of it but rarely see danger, is deprived at the outset of that which forms the real and vital principle of those sentiments which the military character is calculated to inspire. It will, moreover, rarely be found to be a good army. Yet, upon these all the military distinctions, insignia, and decorations, are lavished in as great profusion, as upon troops in which the military character is complete. We may see how the fact is in that respect at the present moment in our own country, but we do not seem to be at all sensible of what are likely to be the effects. The volunteers have clothes as fine, feathers as high, music of as martial a character, decorations of all sorts as captivating and imposing as those of the regular troops. If we continue to pursue this course, diffusing this lustre of military distinctions on that which is not military, and obscuring and eclipsing the regular army, there is danger, that the real military character may not only be enfeebled but destroyed. If you will resort to a contrary course, the true military spirit may again revive, and operating generally and powerfully, like the air we breathe, resume before long its proper influence, and produce its natural effects.

If, in thus objecting to the plans submitted by my Right Honourable Friend and others, I should be asked, whether I had any plan of my own to propose, I should answer, none; nor do I think any necessary. The only change I desire at present, is, to abolish the plans lately adopted, and, in the system of the army, to enlist men for a certain term of years, instead of the practice

which now prevails of enlisting men for life. Let things, in other respects, go on as formerly, and there will not, I apprehend, be any reason to complain. I cannot see why all the machinery of law should be set to work upon our established military system. My only wish is to have it released from that machinery—to have all the obstructions in its way removed.

A great medical writer, of the last century, has laid down a maxim for the conduct of the understanding in matters of science, which may be applied with little variation to the regulation of men's conduct in civil and practical life. *Vera cernit qui aliena rejicit.* Truth will appear as soon as you get rid of error. Affairs will often proceed perfectly well, if you will only remove the impediments and obstructions that are turning them from their proper course. Something analogous to this idea is what I should recommend upon the subject before the house. With good management, I am quite sure that men enough could be found in this country for the ample recruiting of our regular army. There is no scarcity of population. On the contrary, it is far more considerable than at any former period; and there can be no doubt that with the aid of proper encouragement and countenance, by the grant of certain privileges and immunities to those who had served in the army, such as are granted with sufficient liberality to all who have served in the militia, (viz. the right of setting up trades in corporate towns, &c.) and in general by securing to the army its proper proportion of the benefits attached to other modes of life, a supply would be found of men willing to become soldiers, as ample and as well proportioned to the demand, as of men ready to engage in any other trade or calling. I cannot believe it possible that there should not, when I reflect that the poor's rates of this country amount annually, according to the account on the table, to 5,000,000*l.* and when I recollect the extraordinary measure lately taken in Scotland, the policy of which, by-the-by, I very much doubt, of granting such a large sum of money for the construction of a canal, in order to give employment to the poor of that district, and to prevent their emigration to a foreign country. This idea of laying a tax for the purpose of providing employment for a particular class of persons, I cannot but consider as a real poor rate. It is accordingly liable to all the objections chargeable upon measures of that description. I mention it here for the purpose of showing, that the prospect for recruiting our army is by no means discouraging, either on the score of our population, or (unhappily) of the state in which a great part of that population is placed. But I am then told of our trade, and the numbers employed in various branches. I have, however, no hesitation in saying, that trade is favourable to recruiting, and is less so perhaps in its flourishing and growing than in its decli-

ning state. It is rarely that trade can advance rapidly without great fluctuations, the trade receding in one channel as it flows into another; and thus numbers are successively left out of employment, and glad to betake themselves for subsistence to the provision which the army offers. From these considerations I can see no foundation for the endeavours so often made to ascribe to scarcity of population the difficulty which recruiting for the regular army has met with for some time back. Let us try to strip that recruiting of the impediments which have hitherto surrounded it; and there is no reason whatever why we should despair of seeing it go on well. At all events let the experiment be fairly tried. No one surely would wish to have recourse to measures of compulsion in the first instance. When measures of another sort have been tried and have failed; when we have employed, without effect, the plain, obvious, and ordinary methods, then will be time enough to resort to the harshness of compulsory measures. and such strange, wild, and new-fangled projects as that which is now proposed.

Upon the whole I cannot persuade myself to assent to a proposition that has no immediate object but to form a stationary and half military force; and no tendency to increase our regular army but through the medium of a process from which I have no hopes—by a kind of double distillation, of which no one has hitherto shown either the use or the necessity. A notion seems to prevail, that a soldier is a thing that cannot be produced by one continued act;—that there must be a second operation. We create this army of men for limited service, as a kind of false stomach in which the aliment is to be lodged for a time, till it can be removed to its proper receptacle, and there finally elaborated for the use and sustenance of the state. Of the whole of this plan the house has heard enough before. Experiments have been already made upon many parts of it, and certainly not with such success as to encourage a perseverance in the system. But nothing will deter us. There is a perfect passion for legislating upon this subject, and for effecting every thing by the most complicated and circuitous means. My Honourable Friend seems to be actuated by the same sort of feeling as that of the lover in the Apprentice, who, when he is to escape with his mistress, will not suffer her to go out by the street-door, though he is told it is open, but insists upon her descending from the window, by the means of his ladder of ropes. It is in vain that the maid protests that the door is open, and her mistress has nothing to do but to walk down the great stairs. Oh no! says he, but what then becomes of my rope ladder? Such is in truth the language of the present moment. In all this multiplication of plans, I repeat, that very little is to be found congenial with the true military system of the country.

Every thing that has yet been brought forward on the subject has proved to be extravagant, and calculated to produce the opposite of good towards the substantial defence of the country; and of the same nature I am persuaded will the plan be which the house has just heard. I am ready to say that no man is more competent to devise a plan requiring great combination of parts, than my Honourable Friend; but my persuasion on this subject is, that no such plan is necessary; on the contrary, that it must be injurious, particularly when founded on the principles of the system for some time back acted upon; and therefore I feel it my duty to express my disapprobation of the project he has submitted to the house.

After some further objections had been urged against the proposed measure by Mr. Addington, Mr. Fox, and other members, who were replied to by Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Pitt, the bill was brought in, and read a first time.

MR. PITT'S FUNERAL.

JANUARY 27th, 1806.

MR. H. LASCELLES moved an address to His Majesty that he would be pleased to give directions that the remains of the Right Honourable William Pitt be interred at the public charge, and a monument be erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey. This motion having been seconded by the Marquis of Titchfield, supported by Mr. J. H. Browne, Lord Louvaine, Mr. Hiley Addington, Sir R. Buxton, General Tarlton and Earl Temple, and opposed by Lord Folkstone, Mr. William Smith, and the Marquis of Douglas,

MR. WINDHAM rose and spoke as follows:—

HOWEVER painful I may feel the situation in which I stand, I feel that there is a duty imposed upon me that I am bound to discharge. Nothing can be more easy and satisfactory, than to comply with that advice which has been given to all parties, not to let their political hostilities be carried to the grave, and that on such an occasion as this, they should bury all animosities. For my part, the only difficulty I should find in complying with this advice is, that I have no political animosities to bury. Although I join sincerely in admiration of the great talents of the Right Honourable Gentleman who is now no more, yet I think that those talents cannot be said to have been fortunate in the result, and I must observe, that by the custom of this country, and, indeed, by the custom of every nation, at all times, these extraordinary honours are only conferred where there is a certain union of merit and success. This should not be regarded as a mere question of feeling, but it should be considered whether the honours proposed to be granted are customary, or whether they are strictly merited. There is a sort of fortitude on which men sometimes pride themselves,—the fortitude of bearing well the pain of others: there is a sort of generosity also, that loves to indulge itself at the expense of others' feelings: let us take care in the present case, that we are not indulging our generosity at the expense of our public duties. I know of no function requiring to be discharged under a sense of more solemn obligation than that which relates to the adjudication of national honours; these are claims not to be decided by a momentary feeling, but by a strict and impartial examination of the merits of the case.

Let us understand the nature of the proceeding in which we are engaged; let us know upon what ground the supporters of

this motion mean to rely. Do they mean to say that the greatest honours that the nation has to bestow, should be always given to splendid talents exerted in the service of the country; or would they mean to make a distinction, and only give them to men of great talent, who happened to be in public offices? It appears to me, however, that great talents, exerted in the service of the country, are as well entitled to a high reward, if the possessor should not happen to have been in public office, as if he had. Let us see how far this principle leads: it is said, you give the chief honours of the nation to those naval and military commanders who gain important victories; and why not to those who guide their operations? Must not their talents be presumed, at least, as great? Now, Sir, this can be easily answered. An important victory is generally a thing that admits of no dispute, no deception. The general who routs an enemy's army, or the admiral who destroys his fleet, leaves no doubt as to the service that he has performed, and is therefore, by the unanimous opinion of every body, considered as an object of high honour. When, on a late occasion, those honours were paid to an illustrious admiral,* all ranks and descriptions of people, the noble and the mean, the rich and the poor, the enlightened and the ignorant, all felt equally that those honours were due, and every heart vibrated to the general expression of national gratitude and respect. No man can misstate or misrepresent such actions as those; they are not brought forward to answer any party views, or upon false pretences. It is for these reasons that there is a general concurrence in all countries to reward services of that description. Upon services of such a nature there is always almost an absolute unanimity of opinion; but how can it be expected that there will be any thing like an unanimity of opinion, when the question is concerning the merits of a long political life? It is for this reason that all nations make a distinction between the rewards given to a successful commander, and to the minister under whom he has gained his success.

But if it be said that transcendent abilities, long and important services, long experience, and application of the mind to the important interests of the country, should claim as high a reward as is given to the most successful admirals or generals, I shall then ask, where were all those qualities and endowments more conspicuous than in the late Mr. Burke? Mr. Burke, however, was not honoured with a public funeral. And yet Mr. Burke was inferior to no man in the splendour of his talents, nor in the purity of his mind, nor in genuine and disinterested patriotism, nor in long experience and devotion to the public service. Where then

* Lord Nelson.

is the difference of the cases? Do Gentlemen mean to rest it entirely upon this, that men of splendid talents and endowments, if they happen to be in office, are entitled to the highest rewards a nation can bestow; but should they be out of office, they are not entitled to honours, although they should serve their country with equal zeal, integrity, and ability? In general I should say, that the presumptions were in favour of him who had served his country out of office, official situations being those which men may covet from other motives. In every point of comparison that could be made, Mr. Burke stood upon the same level with Mr. Pitt, and I do not see the reason for this difference. If the objections to Mr. Burke's having a public funeral had proceeded from my Honourable Friend (Mr. Fox), or those who voted with him in those times, I should not have been surprised: they might have conceived that bestowing such honours on a man who differed diametrically with them in opinion at that time, would imply a condemnation of their own conduct. But that was not the case; it was not from them that the objection came, but from Gentlemen on the other side of the House, who took Mr. Burke as the leader of their opinions, who cried him up to the skies, who founded themselves upon what he had done, but who were afraid, that if they consented to such honours, it would appear as if they approved of all the sentiments of that great man, some of which were, perhaps, of too high a tone for them to relish. They, therefore, would not, at that time, have agreed to a resolution which would have declared Mr. Burke an excellent statesman.

When the French revolution broke out, it not only broke up the whole system of European politics, but it broke up, at the same time, many of the dearest connexions which had united men in ties of private, as well as political friendships. I then differed upon that subject materially from the opinion of my Honourable Friend (Mr. Fox), and being, in a great measure, induced by the authority, and pressed indeed by the instigation, of the great man I have mentioned (Mr. Burke), I connected myself with the administration of which Mr. Pitt was at the head. It is not to be supposed, that because I joined his administration, that I necessarily approved of every part of his system. The question with me was, whether, upon the whole, the forming that connexion was not the most likely way to promote those objects, which, in my opinion, were desirable to be obtained. Whether in so doing, I judged right or wrong, or whether now, after the event, my opinion remains the same as it was before, are questions that are of little consequence. If I were to divide the whole of the political life of the distinguished person here spoken of, into two distinct periods, one the period before the breaking out of the French revolution, and the other the period subsequent to that

event, and that I were called to declare, whether I thought that either, separately, or both conjointly, were of a sort to call for the honours now proposed, or to justify the character ascribed in the resolution, of an "excellent statesman," I must say, no. I have no wish to bring forward my opinion in that respect at the present moment; but, when compelled to declare myself, I must say what I think. I cannot consent to pronounce an opinion different from what I think the true one, and thus to contribute to mislead both the present time and posterity on a period of our history which it is most important for them to judge rightly of. With the fullest acknowledgment both of the talents and virtues of the eminent man in question, I do not think, from whatever cause it has proceeded, that his life has been beneficial to his country. For the earlier part of it, including the commencement of his power, I must contradict every principle, that I ever maintained, if I said that it was so. For the succeeding period, the greatest in which a statesman was ever called to act, I cannot say, that he acted his part greatly. I do not judge merely from the event; though the event, for the present purpose, might be all that need be considered. The French revolution was, indeed, a storm, in which vessels, the best formed and conducted with the greatest skill, might easily founder: but, what I mean to say is, that, in my opinion, the vessel was *not* conducted with the greatest skill, and that it is, in all human probability, to the fault of the pilot, that we are to ascribe our present fearful situation. This is no new opinion on my part: I must think so, if I think, as I have always professed to do, with the other great man that I have alluded to, Mr. Burke.

I think it necessary to say thus much, in order to free myself from a supposed charge of inconsistency, in denying, generally, the merits of a minister, with whom for a considerable time, I had acted. But all that would result from this denial is, that the parts, in which I agreed, did not outweigh, in my opinion, those in which I differed. I have stated, however, already, that even in those parts in which I agreed, my agreement was only qualified. I agreed, as with respect to my Honourable Friends near me, from whom I totally differed; but, as with respect to the opinion of Mr. Burke, I must be considered as widely differing.

I repeat, that I feel it painful to oppose the motion; but, I must say, that honours, of such a nature as is now proposed, ought not to be given hastily, from any momentary feeling, but from a full conviction on the part of each person who consents to them, that they are strictly merited, not by the possession merely of talents and virtues, but by great and essential services, rendered, and acknowledged to have been rendered, to the state. Can this be to be the case in the present instance? An Honourable

Gentleman (Mr. Hawkins Browne) has cited the flourishing state of the finances and commerce of the country, compared with what they were twenty years ago, as a decisive proof of what we owe to the eminent statesman that we have lost. But, woe betide us, if, in these times, we measure the prosperity of the country by its riches. When Honourable Gentlemen talk of our riches, we must ask how long we can be sure of enjoying them? 'Three thousand ducats a year, and but a year in all those ducats!' The prosperity of a country is to be estimated like a West-India estate, not by its annual produce, but by its fee-simple. What did any one think of the value of an estate in the West-Indies, at the moment when Admiral Villeneuve was reigning triumphant in those seas; and, till the illustrious hero, whose funeral we lately celebrated, had arrived to drive him back?

My great objection to granting the honours now demanded, is this: it has not been the usage of this country, or of mankind in general, to grant the highest rewards, unless in cases where merit has been crowned with success. Of the many admirals who have been rewarded with the peerage, in every instance there was a certain share of success as well as of merit. If Lord St. Vincent had lost half of his fleet in the action with the Spaniards, or Lord Nelson been defeated, either at the battle of the Nile, or off Trafalgar, although the highest exertion of courage and talents had been proved, the same rewards would not have been given. Lord Nelson displayed as much courage and enterprise at the unsuccessful attack of Teneriffe as in those glorious victories; but if he had lost his life at Teneriffe, it can hardly be supposed, that he would have been honoured with such a funeral as was given to him when he fell in the arms of victory. Now, as to the success of Mr. Pitt, it must be allowed that the change in the state of this country and of Europe, during his time, has been most fatal, and that the last periods of his life have been most disastrous. Can we, in the face of these facts, in the midst of the very ruin, which his last measures have brought on; whether by his fault or not, I do not enquire; decree the highest honours, that a grateful nation can render in return for the most distinguished services? The character of these measures, and still more the general merits of his political life, can they now be discussed? and should we not be complained of, were we now to attempt it, not only as opening a subject more proper for history than for a debate, but as cruelly raking up the ashes of the dead, now newly consigned to the tomb? The honours which are now proposed, are such as the whole history of our country does not afford a parallel instance of, except in the case of his illustrious father. The services, however, that the great Lord Chatham had rendered to the country, and the success of his measures, were such as were never denied

by anybody ; and therefore the resolution which might be strictly applicable to the father, and which in that case was carried unanimously, stands in fatal contrast to the administration of his son ; which, in all its later periods, was eminently unsuccessful, and which very many considered as meriting disapprobation.

For these reasons, I think we should exercise the great and solemn privilege we possess with the most mature deliberation, and that we should not, contrary to the usual practice of this and every other country, give the highest honours of the state to mark the memory of a minister, who, though possessing talents as great as ever appeared in any age of the world, a character and frame of mind fitted for every thing most arduous, and feeling, as must have been the case, a strong desire that the country should prosper in his hands, was unsuccessful in the result, and will not, I fear, be recorded to posterity, as having advanced the real interests and the character of the country.

After Mr. Windham had concluded his speech, Mr. Ryder, Mr. Rose, Lord Castlereagh, and Mr. Wilberforce spoke in favour of the motion ; Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Fox against it. The House then divided, and the numbers were :

For the motion	258
Against it	89
Majority	<u>169</u>

MR. PITT'S DEBTS.

FEBRUARY 3d, 1806.

MR. CARTWRIGHT moved, "That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, to represent to His Majesty that this House having received information, that, on the death of the late Right Honourable William Pitt, he left debts to a considerable amount, for the payment of which his property was found insufficient, and being desirous to show every testimony of their esteem and respect for the memory of the said Right Honourable William Pitt, most humbly beseech His Majesty to advance a sum not exceeding 40,000*l.* towards the payment of the said debts, and to assure His Majesty, that this House will make good the same." Mr. Bootle, having seconded the motion,

MR. WINDHAM felt satisfaction in thinking that it was as easy to concur in this vote, as it was difficult for him to agree to that which was proposed a few nights since. Every thing that related to great talents, long services, and those abilities that were ornaments to the country, demanded and received his approbation. The present motion had his assent, as it fell within the distinction he had already drawn respecting public honours and munificence. It called for no vote of approbation in favour of an individual for the whole of a long and varied course of public measures and public conduct, in contradiction to the opinions held or expressed by any gentleman, on various occasions, in the course of that public career. No man had a right to call on another for any approbation of that nature, and he felt that every man so attempted to be called upon, had an undoubted right to complain. In viewing the character of the deceased, no one could ascribe to him any low attachment to pecuniary gain; his mind was above such considerations; his conceptions had too much grandeur to admit of any thing of that kind. He did not think that any dangerous precedent was set by this measure. If these debts had been contracted by profusion and excess, by dissipation and vain luxuries, they might admit of a question. On the contrary, they were contracted by no lavish expenditure, no useless ostentation. The great character of Mr. Pitt's mind was too sterling to descend to those means of prodigality; and he even neglected what, in these times, was due to the situation he filled. He had an entire superiority to any thing of the nature of affectation. His salary was not enough to provide the indulgencies fit for his station, and the consequence was seen in the incurring of these debts. Insufficiency

of salary, want of pecuniary attention, and the necessary impositions to which he was exposed, must have combined to embarrass his affairs. He therefore considered, that, in the part the House were now called upon to act, they were not indulging themselves in an improper sentiment of liberality, nor catching at any transient reputation of magnanimity, nor wasting the public money; nor should he think that the case, even were they to make some provision for those who were most near and dear to the deceased.

The motion was assented to by Mr. Ponsonby, Lord Folkstone, Mr. Rose, the Marquis of Douglas, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Canning.—Mr. William Smith opposed it. The question was put and carried, without a division.

VACCINE INOCULATION.

JULY 29th, 1807.

THE Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Perceval) in a Committee of the whole House, proposed as a Resolution, "That a sum not exceeding 10,000*l.* be granted to His Majesty to be paid to Dr. Edward Jenner, as a further reward for promulgating his discovery of Vaccine Inoculation; by which a mild and efficacious mode of superseding that dreadful malady the Small-pox is established; and that the same be issued without any fee or other reward whatever." Mr. Shaw Lefevre opposed the Resolution. Lord Henry Petty supported it, but observed, that though he should not move any amendment to it, he should have no difficulty in acceding to one for a larger sum. Mr. Morris moved, that, instead of 10,000*l.*, the sum of 20,000*l.* should be inserted in the Resolution. Mr. Wilberforce proposed that, instead of this additional 10,000*l.*, the sum of 1,000*l.* a year should be given to Dr. Jenner.

MR. WINDHAM.—In a case where the opinion of the committee appears to be so much made up, I shall certainly not think it right to trouble them at any length, more especially after the clear and forcible manner in which the subject has been already stated and argued. The question is, whether the sum of 20,000*l.* should be given to Dr. Jenner in addition to what he has already received, or only 10,000*l.*; and I am decidedly in favour of the larger sum. There is undoubtedly in every case of this sort a considerable difficulty in settling what should be the precise amount of the reward granted, and this difficulty is not least in those cases, where, as at present, the reward must after all fall infinitely short of the value of the thing received. The principles, indeed, on which a judgment should be formed, are not difficult to be laid down; but they could be only general principles, and such as might still leave great doubt as to the application of them, and the quantum which should be given in each particular instance. The first of these principles, and that in fact which must lay the foundation for all the rest, is that the invention should be real, and should belong to the person who claims to be the author of it. On this point the house could not possibly act with too much caution, especially after the examples which have occurred even in our own time, where rewards have been given to inventions and discoveries, pretending only to be such, and which, if their pretensions had been better, were not the inventions and discoveries of the persons who brought them forward. Till that point in any

case should be sufficiently ascertained, it is needless to talk of any other. But that once established, the next inquiry seems to be, as to the utility of the invention supposed: for it can rarely happen that the public will with propriety be called upon to grant rewards for discoveries, which, however curious and ingenious, are not of any value. Each of these conditions is indispensable: but there may be inventions both real and valuable, which yet are not such as to call for remuneration out of the public purse. If they were the mere effect of accident, if they required for the production of them no genius or talents, or if they were the result of no previous search or endeavour; if, on the other hand, whatever was their origin, they were of a nature to be their own reward by making the fortune of their authors, in each of these cases there is nothing for which any call could be made on the munificence of the public. On one supposition only could such a demand have place, namely, that of an invention, which though useful and valuable, and certain to prove in the end beneficial to its author as well as to the public, could not without the aid of public assistance overcome the difficulties which would for a while oppose themselves to its establishment. I cannot pretend to say that upon this last score the discovery now before the committee is one that calls for the intervention of the house; such is its immense utility, such the sense already entertained of that utility in this country, and such the still deeper impressions, which, I am glad, though somewhat ashamed to say, a sense of that utility has made on the minds of other countries, that there is little danger that vaccination will not make its way, whether the legislature here gives any assistance to it or not. It should not, however, be out of our minds, that even upon this ground the assistance of the legislature would be far from superfluous: but before I say more upon this head, I wish to revert to those other general principles to which I have alluded, and to see from them both what the necessity of reward is in this case, and how far, in the option which the question affords, the committee ought to decide for the larger sum. The reality and the utility of the discovery I consider as being placed out of all doubt: no one will pretend to say, that the world was not about to owe the practice of vaccination to Dr. Jenner. That the preventive property of the vaccine matter has been long known among certain inferior classes in particular districts of this kingdom, was a fact never denied or dissembled: that a solitary instance, or even more than one, of matter being taken from the cow, and applied purposely to the arms, to produce the disease, is, I believe, not questioned. The merit of Dr. Jenner was, that he had remarked what others had overlooked; that he had cultivated what others neglected; that he had pursued an inquiry which others had quished or never thought of engaging in; that from a small,

unheeded despised fact, he had with great sagacity discovered, and with infinite pains, judgment, and perseverance, developed and brought forth powers which no one had ever thought or dreamt of, which were to fill the world with admiration and gratitude, and to render a service to mankind which was never before supposed to be within the limits of possibility. He who did this was surely entitled *primâ facie* to some reward from his country, if not from all the world. But I wish the house to consider the merits of this invention a little more in detail. Even its magnitude, the point probably on which there would be the least question, requires some little consideration duly to appreciate it. It is not merely the decrease of danger and suffering on the part of those inoculated with vaccine matter, as compared with those inoculated in the common way, that constitutes the great advantage; it is the singular and invaluable circumstance of no infection being thereby communicated to others; the consequence of which is, that the final end and consummation of this great discovery is nothing less than the total extermination of the small-pox, and the restoring mankind to the state in which they were before this dreadful scourge came upon them, or rather to a still better state, as the means would now exist of freeing them from that pestilence should it ever again return. The common mode of inoculation, while it secures, or nearly secures those to whom it is applied, continues for ever to keep open, if not to enlarge, the source of danger to others; insomuch that calculations have been made to show, that the mortality by the small-pox since the introduction of inoculation has been greater than it was before. It is not to be inferred from thence, as some seem to suppose, that if the facts were true, the world must have been a sufferer by inoculation; the world has gained by the change which it has introduced into the habits of life, and the effect it has had in freeing men from that terror which confined them before to their own homes and neighbourhood, and which operated as a continued check upon intercourse. If the danger was upon the whole as great, they at least had not the same terrors of it; had their fears been the same, and the same precautions in consequence been observed, the effects of inoculation would have been found possibly in a different shape, that, namely, of a diminution of the deaths. These views of the final good to be produced by the vaccine, and of the consequent rate at which it ought to be prized, depend unquestionably upon the truth of the character ascribed to it, and which will be found in its best, as well as in its most authentic form, in the Report of the Physicians that is before the house. This Report indeed I consider as being all that is necessary to complete conviction. Though it may not be true, that in all cases the opinion of physicians must be received as conclusive on points of medical prac-

tice, they may safely be trusted for not assenting too readily to the introduction of what was new, armed as they were, not only by the common feelings of professional jealousy, but by the reasonable distrust which long experience must have taught them, of pretended improvements and discoveries; and here when the physicians are satisfied, the house may safely dismiss its doubts. It is not necessary to resort for further satisfaction to the testimonies that are pouring in from all quarters, not only from cities and districts, but from whole nations and countries. The value, therefore, of the discovery as effecting all that was ascribed to it, and as ending in nothing but the total extinction of the small-pox, not to mention the *quantum* of life which it would save in the mean time, I shall consider as proved. With equal confidence may I assume, what no one I presume will dispute, that but for Dr. Jenner the world would at present have been without that blessing, and might have remained so for a period of which no man can fix the extent. Here then are three of the main conditions necessary in such a question, to an extent far more than was necessary, a discovery of inestimable value, and a discoverer whose claim cannot be disputed, and who owes his discovery not to chance, but to a long perseverance in endeavours, prompted by the most laudable motives, and guided by no common or ordinary powers. It remains to be asked, whether there are not other qualities in addition even to those of genius and industry, which have been manifested by Dr. Jenner in the course of this discovery, and which mark him out as having a peculiar claim for public remuneration; and whether the discovery has been of such a nature, especially in his hands, as to render legislative interference unnecessary by the advantages to the author which it has itself produced. There is no point of the case more applicable than this to the question immediately before the committee, and few that ought more to be brought forward for the author's honour. Dr. Jenner has shown throughout that he was actuated by motives of far higher consideration than those of regard to his personal interests; though to establish fully the reputation of the practice it was necessary to make it public; though by making it public he lost in a great degree the means of converting it to his own advantage, yet it is not to be doubted, that by a due compromise of these opposite considerations, a man intent only upon his own interest might have contrived to open for many years a source of such profit to himself, as to have set him much at his ease, in respect to any decision which Parliament might thereafter have taken. Dr. Jenner did no such thing; so far from seeking profit, he sacrificed his time, his money, his prospects in his profession, to the prosecution of his discovery, and never seems to have thought for a moment of himself, while any means remained

untried for promoting the great object which he had in view. It was not thus that those persons (the Suttons) proceeded, who introduced into inoculation the last great improvement which it received, and the highest perhaps of which it was capable. They kept their practice concealed to the last moment, and succeeded notwithstanding in obtaining such confidence in their method, in spite of the prejudices excited against them, similar to those now excited against Dr. Jenner, as enabled them severally to make great fortunes, and even to furnish for a time the means of similar profit to others. On what grounds shall it be said, that a similar concealment and similar success were not practicable on the part of Dr. Jenner? In point of fact the attempt was not made: and what is still more directly to the purpose, the object of such an attempt, if it had been made, has not been accomplished. Dr. Jenner is not the richer for his discovery; he is the poorer; and it is a circumstance only of addition, a circumstance, however, of the highest honour to him, and that ought to enter largely into our consideration, that he is the poorer by his own disinterestedness, and by the preference given to public objects over considerations affecting only himself. In these circumstances, what Dr. Jenner has hitherto received is 10,000*l.*, and the question now is, whether that 10,000*l.* should be made up to 20,000*l.* or 30,000*l.* Twenty thousand or thirty thousand, or the double of either of those sums, appear so small and insignificant when placed by the side of such a service as he has rendered, that the proportion between them is wholly lost, and with a view to compensation for the benefit obtained, it seems hardly of consequence whether the one is given or the other. Dr. Jenner's cause seems in danger of suffering by the very greatness of the service which he has rendered. The utmost that can be done is so inadequate, that it becomes almost a matter of doubt whether it is worth while that any thing should be done at all. We must recur in this difficulty to the great principle by which the whole is governed, and which, by tracing the reasons why any thing at all should be given, may furnish to the house the best assistance that can be had for settling their opinions as to the amount of the sum. Rewards, like punishments, are for the sake of example; and can be regulated by nothing but by a view of the consequences they are to produce on the general interests of society. By the reward given in any instance, a rate of bounty is laid down, as far as that instance operates, for the encouragement of similar exertions in future; and what rate should we establish, and what encouragement hold out, if a service, such as the present, the greatest possibly that by any single act, or by any single person was ever conferred upon mankind, and displaying in the course of it qualities the most valuable, and conduct the most meritorious, should receive from

a country like this no greater reward than a sum of 20,000*l*? I will not proceed to inquire whether the same might not be said of 30,000*l*, but will confine myself to the question as it stands before the committee, where the only point for determination is the option between the two sums. It will hardly be said, that on the principles here laid down, talents and genius are no fit subjects of reward; for these are qualities which encouragement would not alter; they are the gifts of nature. Of the genius and talents by which the world is benefited, how large is the portion which is not the gift of nature, but the effect of pains and cultivation! The application at least must always be voluntary, and cannot therefore be considered among those things on which reward and encouragement can have no influence. Let a reward be given to Dr. Jenner for his disinterestedness only, for the sacrifices which he has made, and it will not be found that a less sum should be given him, than the highest of those which are now asked. This is a limit afforded by the case itself. We cannot give to Dr. Jenner, for the most valuable discovery ever made, less than would be sufficient to indemnify him for expenses actually incurred, and profits actually sacrificed. A sum not less considerable must be awarded him, if we should take as our criterion not the reason of the thing, but what has been the practice of the house on similar occasions. Does the discovery for which 30,000*l* is now asked, exceed no more the value of discoveries for which sums of 5000*l* and 10,000*l* have been granted, than in the proportion respectively of those sums? If our own authority as derived from former instances is not sufficient, let us take for our guide the feelings and opinions of foreign nations as to the magnitude of the discovery, and the gratitude due to the author. Could we bear to have it said, that England, the country which gave birth to this invention; England, where from the general diffusion of knowledge, and high cultivation of medical science, its merits might be expected to be best understood, and most truly appreciated, should notwithstanding be the country, which in proportion to its means, to its general practice, and to the peculiar call made upon it, was the least disposed to mark its sense of the value of the invention by a liberal or competent reward to the author? The feelings and opinions of foreign nations are not merely a means of showing what is right, but do of themselves, in a case of this sort, constitute a motive of conduct, and may make that right which was not so before. It may be right in certain cases that England should do what others think she ought to do; that she should never fall below the opinion which the world has formed of her. The fame which the country has acquired as that in which publicly or privately useful inventions are most sure to find their reward, has had no small share in producing those which arose

among ourselves, and of attracting those which originated in other places. The very pride of the country on this head ought not to be lightly regarded; but on a larger view its interests are also concerned. One further consideration ought not to be omitted, arising in part out of circumstances which I have already touched upon, but operating in a manner still more pointed and direct. It is the impression likely to be made on the public mind of this country, by the greater or less reward which parliament may think it right to give, as indicating the opinion of parliament on the value of the discovery and the certainty of its principles, and the effect thereby to be produced in fortifying or counteracting those ignorant prejudices and wicked arts by which, so little to our credit, the progress of the invention has been hitherto obstructed. The house knows what are the means which have been employed for that purpose, and that there are men in this country, happily not of the greatest authority, who do not think it repugnant to their duty nor find it beneath their character, to try to prevent, or rather to obstruct and delay the adoption of this practice, by turning against it the passions and prejudices of those, who have nothing but passion and prejudice to guide them, or who must be considered at least as wholly incapable of forming upon the subject any sound judgment of their own. It is in vain to say that the arts of such persons can produce but little effect. Finally, no doubt, they cannot prevent the establishment of a system confirmed continually by fact and experience, and sanctioned by all that is intelligent and respectable; but in the mean while there are the vulgar and the ignorant, among whom arguments such as they use, are far more than a match for all that can be produced by men who employ for the support of their cause no arms but those of truth and reason. Persons to whom these would apply on a subject like the present, form, it must be remembered, but a small portion of the whole mass of the community, and to what period must the hope be removed of seeing the final extinction of the disorder, if four-fifths, perhaps, of the population of the country, are made to resist the progress of vaccination, and to remain as a fund for perpetuating and propagating infection? Whatever tends to shorten the duration of such a state of things, must be an object of great importance; and what is more likely to counteract the pernicious influence of the practices here spoken of, than the authority of parliament, manifesting by the amount of the reward, the soundness of the practice, and of the blessings which it is calculated to dispense. Should it be said that in this view the difference between the sums proposed could do but little, let it be remembered that in the scale of national expenditure the difference between the sums is but little; and no country need fear being impoverished by the liberality of its

rewards for discoveries such as the present. It would be happy for the country and for the world, should the demands for such exertions of national gratitude and munificence, be more numerous and more frequent. In every point of view in which I can consider the subject, I cannot hesitate in declaring in favour of the larger sum. My own opinion in fact is, that a sum still larger would be more suitable to the character of the country, and more conformable to the principles which ought to govern the conduct of countries upon such occasions.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer again spoke in favour of the sum originally proposed. Mr. W. Smith, Mr. Whitbread, and Mr. G. H. Rose, supported Mr. Morris's Amendment. The question was then put that the "twenty thousand" do stand as a part of the Resolution, when the Committee divided,

Ayes	60
Noes	47
Majority in favour of the larger sum,	<u>13</u>

The Resolution accordingly passed in its amended shape.

N. B. The above speech was corrected by Mr. Windham at the request of Mr. Murray, Secretary to the National Vaccine Institution, for the purpose of being inserted in the "Debates on Parliament respecting the Jennerian Controversy."

CAMPAIGN IN SPAIN.

FEBRUARY 24th, 1809.

MR. PONSNEY moved, "That it is indispensably necessary that this House should inquire into the causes, conduct, and events of the late Campaign in Spain." Lord Castlereagh, General Stewart, and Mr. Secretary Canning, opposed the motion. Mr. Tierney and Lord Milton supported it. In reply to Mr. Canning,

MR. WINDHAM was determined to confine what he had to say to the objects of the inquiry, and in that case should pass by four-fifths of the speech of the Right Honourable Gentleman. However able the speech of that Right Honourable Gentleman, it had been very little to the purpose. It was an odd moment for the Right Honourable Gentleman to express his hopes, and an odd quarter from which such hopes proceeded, when our army had been withdrawn from Spain, when we had left the Spaniards to fight their own battles. This had something so ludicrous in it, that he wondered it did not remind the Right Honourable Gentleman of the very pleasant lines,

"He fled full soon
On the first of June,
And bade the rest keep fighting."

When we had damned their cause, it was no time for us to give the Spaniards lectures upon national energies and perseverance.

But, to go soberly to the consideration of the plan of the campaign: it had been agreed, on all hands, that the crisis was one of the most important, and that a greater hope had never been opened for the salvation of Europe. The spirit of the country had been exalted to the highest pitch; every nerve had been braced, and all classes of the community concurred in encouraging and supporting ministers; yet the event had shown that there had been an universal failure. When the greatest stake the country ever had was lost, either by ill fortune, or by the mismanagement of ministers, and of those ministers to whom the greatest means were entrusted, that were ever entrusted to any ministers, it was full time for inquiry.

There were two things to be considered: first, the propriety of sending troops to Portugal: secondly, the mode of sending them from Portugal to Spain. It would be necessary to ask ministers why they did not send out any force before the 12th of

July? and why, after they knew that Junot's retreat was, in a manner, cut off, and that he could not join Dupont, they sent troops to Portugal? If they were resolved to send troops to Portugal, it appeared as if it would have been better to have waited till the reinforcements joined; for, as it was managed, it appeared a doubtful thing which of the two armies would have beat. Junot was as confident of success as Sir Arthur Wellesley; and, between two such generals, and two such armies, there was as glorious an uncertainty in war, as in law. But, supposing even that Sir Arthur might feel confident of beating Junot, yet it was not to be calculated that Junot must, of his own accord, come down to be beaten. "Come down and be hanged, master Barnadine!" It appeared evidently that he could not be compelled to do so; for if, after having been beat, he was able to protract, for many months, a defensive war, he could certainly have done that just as well before he was beat. Although we were the victors, yet, from an unfortunate arrangement made by ministers at home, the conquering general was superseded, and the fruits of the victory were lost. It was the effect of military councils at home, by which Sir John Moore was placed in such a situation as made it necessary to fall back upon Corunna, and to execute that retreat with such rapidity as necessarily exposed our troops to great loss, and risked the capture of the whole army, if, by any shift of wind, they had been prevented from embarking. Our expedition to Spain was managed in such a manner, as not only to do no good, but to do what was much worse than nothing. We held out to Spain the disheartening example of what we called our best army, retreating from the field without striking a single blow, and on the mere rumour of the enemy's advance. When we left the field in this manner, it was in vain to tell the Spaniards, "Do you go on fighting, my brave fellows, and never mind us." We showed them, by our example, that our best troops could do nothing, and therefore that there was little chance of their undisciplined peasantry succeeding better.

It appeared a great fault of the military councils of this country, that upon the 12th of July they were so very badly informed of the situation of Portugal, a country where every man was our friend, where information would issue from every pore, that they supposed there were 5000 French in that country, when, in fact, there were 25,000. If Spain had been assisted in the best manner, there was every reason to suppose that our assistance would have been effectual, as Spain had, besides her mass (a species of force common to every country,) several armies, tolerably well organized, and led on by skilful commanders. He had been often reproached for not expressing as high an opinion as other Gentlemen, of a rising in mass. He should, however, again repeat, that

it would be quite idle and childish to expect the Spanish mass, or the mass of any other country, to stop the course of Buonaparte's army, or of any considerable division of it. Let the force of the mass be what it would, be the medium more dense or more rare, the army would pass through it nearly as a cannon-ball would pass through the air, without any regard to its density or rarity. An army went where it listed, and was not to be stopped in its course by peasantry. He did not know that the Spaniards assembled at Bayonne were quite as great traitors as they were represented. If they saw, and were perfectly convinced that Spain could offer no effectual resistance to Buonaparte, they might, without much treachery to their countrymen, tell them they were unable to resist, and that it was much better for them to submit, at once, without drawing all the evils of war upon their heads.

This was a question not unfit for our government, too, to consider; and if it was decided, as he (Mr. W.) thought it was rightly, that a chance did exist of the emancipation of Spain, and that no effort should be spared to assist that chance on the part of this country, then the only inquiry was, what force shall we send? and in what manner shall it be applied? And here it was impossible not to be struck, not only with the total want of plan, but with the total want of all right conception, in the Honourable Gentlemen, of the very nature of the great work in which they were about to engage.

There were evidently two courses to be pursued; either to strike a stroke in the part that first presented itself, namely, on the Ebro, and to endeavour to drive the enemy out of Spain, by attacking him instantly, while his force was small, and when his views upon Austria, or his jealousy of what Austria might design against him, kept his attention divided, and made it impossible for him much to augment his numbers; or, giving that attempt up as hopeless, to proceed, at once, to what ought to be the general plan of the campaign, with a view of affording to Spain any hope of final deliverance. On the former of these modes of proceeding, though the most tempting, and that which ministers had been most blamed for not endeavouring, he should give no opinion; because, few but those in office could have the necessary means for judging. It was a very nice question, depending on information of the force which the French actually had, and the probability there might be of their being able to send large reinforcements, in case they should have reason to think, from observation of our armaments, that we had an intention of acting upon that quarter. There might be danger in that case, not only of the enemy's force becoming so great, as to destroy the hope of our forcing them from the Ebro, but also of their falling in by the way with some of our columns, and of destroying them before

we could form a junction with our allies. The time, too, was short, the execution must be prompt, and there was all the difficulty of sending a large force into any of the northern ports of Spain, at a period of the year at all late. This difficulty had not been found insuperable, as had been seen in the case of the Marquis de Romana's army, nor did the probability seem great, that Buonaparte, having once disposed his troops, and settled his measures for a war with Austria, could have suddenly reversed his plans, and transferred his forces, so as to have arrived in Spain by the time our troops had begun to act.

It was not true, either, that the one plan created any necessity of giving up the other. If the force sent to the Ebro had, as it ought to have been, been chiefly cavalry, the force, namely, which the Spaniards most wanted, and which we had most ready and could best spare; such a force, even if found in the event insufficient for its immediate object, could still have been able to take care of itself, and to have retired in safety through Spain, a country of friends and allies, to that part of the Peninsula, where, at all events, and in every view, the great mass of our force should be collected. This part was no other than the Southern Provinces, the neighbourhood of Cadiz, and Gibraltar. The reasoning that determined this choice was really little short of demonstrable. Whatever force you send into Spain, small or great, can you be sure, even with all the aid that the armies or masses of Spain can give you, that it will be able to resist the hosts that Buonaparte can pour in against you, having for his supply nothing less than a sort of inexhaustible ocean, the whole population of Europe? Undoubtedly, the means possessed by Buonaparte were such as to leave but little hope of escape at any rate; yet some there must be, otherwise why did we send any troops at all, or encourage the Spaniards to resist? No one, however, could feel confident, or, at least, certain; and therefore if we send any army into Spain, great or small, we must think of the means, in case of extremity, of bringing them away. The inference drawn by the Honourable Gentlemen, from these premises, seemed to be, that we ought to send only a small force: much upon the same principle which we heard of on a former occasion, when bad horses were sent, and horses unfit for the service, because they would be a less sacrifice if lost: but, great or small, the necessity of a retreat being provided seemed to be nearly equal. If the army was large, the stake was greater; and if small, the chance was greater of losing it. Now, there was in all Spain, including Portugal, that is, in the whole Peninsula, but two places, and those in the same quarter, from which a large body of troops, when pressed by a superior army, could hope to get away, viz. Cadiz, and Gibraltar. There was, therefore, no other part of Spain

where an army from this country, large enough to be of any use, and not a mere flying corps, could, with propriety, be trusted, except in the neighbourhood of Cadiz and Gibraltar, or in such circumstances as to have its retreat upon one or other of those places always open.

There, therefore, he (Mr. W.) would have collected not only a large army, but the greatest force, that the country, in its then state of zeal and ardour, could by possibility have furnished. There was no reason why, instead of the 30,000, (which those who like at all times to dwell so much upon the means of Buonaparte, think at other times would be sufficient) we might not have had an army of 100,000. No one disliked more than he did, the practice of recruiting from the militia: but bad as he thought that, when meant as a part of a general system of recruiting, and great as he thought the objection to it, at all times, he was still of opinion that there were occasions when such objections must be made to give way; and if ever such an occasion did, or could exist, unquestionably the present was one.

The effect of such an army, ably conducted, was not to be spoken lightly of. He was not prepared to say, that it would have succeeded. Who shall say that any thing would succeed? But as its chances would be better, so would its risks be less. A hundred thousand men, with Gibraltar to retreat upon, was a far less risk to the country than 30,000 in the situation where the Honourable Gentlemen had placed them; nay, than 30,000, in the very situation spoken of; because, a general must be very deficient in knowledge of his business, very different from the Honourable General opposite (Sir A. Wellesley,) who, in such an abundant country, and with such a fortress behind him, would, with an army of that amount, suffer himself to be prevented from making good his retreat, by any army which the enemy could bring against him.—For, when we talked of Buonaparte's numbers, we must recollect where these numbers were to act. To meet in the south of Spain a British force of 100,000, Buonaparte must bring over the Pyrenees a force of not less than 200,000; to say nothing of the demand that would be made upon him by the large Spanish army, that might be raised in that part of Spain, to co-operate with the British, and which the presence of such a British force would help to raise. Buonaparte would have a whole kingdom which he must garrison behind him, if he would either be sure of his supplies, or make provision against total destruction in the event of any reverse. He must fight us at arm's-length, while our strength would be exerted within distance, with an impregnable fortress at hand, furnishing at once a safe retreat in case of disaster, and a source of endless supply by means of safe and undisturbable communication with this country.

And let it not be said, that while the army continued in the south Buonaparte might continue master of the north; what mastery could he have of any part of Spain, while such an army could keep on foot in any other? And why, in case of success, did the security of its retreat require that it should never advance? He (Mr. W.) should be willing to compromise for the result to Spain, which would enable us and the Spaniards to retain an army in that country, which Buonaparte should not have the means of dispersing.

There was never any thing so demonstrable, therefore, as that the only way of carrying on effectually a campaign in Spain, whatever else you might have done, was to collect your army in the south. Consistent with that, you might have made the trial, if those who had the means of judging should have found it advisable, of driving the French from the Ebro; and the complete success of that attempt might have spared the necessity of actually landing at Cadiz or Gibraltar, though still always keeping those fortresses in view, in case of being overpowered by numbers. Consistent with that, you might, as was even still more evident, have prosecuted your designs on Portugal, though in a different manner and with different views. If the object was not, as was now described, to get Junot out of Portugal upon any terms; even upon those of removing him, through the medium of our disgrace, into Spain; but to destroy or render captive a French army, then, instead of the sort of predatory desultory excursion on which the Honourable General was employed, why not send a full and competent portion of the force destined to be collected in the south, so as to have proceeded to their destination through Portugal, and to have swept off Junot in their way? A force raised to the greatest possible amount to which the mind and means of the country, —then elevated above itself and exalted to something of a preternatural greatness, (*majorque videtur, nec mortale sonans*)—could have carried it, should have been placed in Spain in a situation, the only one which the country afforded, where it would have been safe from the risk of total loss or capture, and would not have been kept down by the idea, that the deposit was too great for the country to hazard.

This should have been the great foundation, the base line, of the plan of the campaign. On this the country might have given a loose to all its exertions, with the consolatory reflection, that the greater its exertions the greater its security, the more it made its preparations effectual to their purpose, the less was the risk at which it acted. From this, other operations might have branched out in different directions, as circumstances pointed out. It was scandalous that nothing had ever been done to assist our friends

or to annoy our enemies on the east side of Spain, where to a power having the complete command at sea, the finest opportunities were presented, and had been most unaccountably neglected. The history of the campaign to the east, which presents nothing but one universal blank, was one of the parts of this most miserably conducted business for which the ministers could least set up any excuse. It seemed to have been total neglect and forgetfulness. They forgot that there was such a coast as the eastern coast of Spain; that it was accessible everywhere to our ships, placed as the high road for the entry of troops from France, inhabited by the race of men, who fought at Gerona and Saragossa; and on the other hand, that we had a large army doing nothing in Sicily, or who, if we were to attempt to employ them where they were, must be employed in worse than nothing. For all operations in this quarter of Spain, Gibraltar afforded the most marked facilities. With a large army stationed in the south, the enemy could never know what detachments we were slipping out behind us, nor with what descents they might be threatened in their rear or on their flanks. The army need never have been idle; nor, what was hardly less advantageous, need never be supposed to be idle.—One general consequence resulting from a station, where an army might have been assembled really worthy of the cause and of the country, and whose utility would have been apparent and striking, was, that it would have given us an ascendancy in the Spanish councils, highly advantageous to them, and such as, with tolerably good conduct, might have been made not less popular.—There was no one who would deprecate more than he should any meddling spirit of interference in their internal concerns, or any assumption of a right of control: but the existence of an authority arising from merits and services, from the value of what was done, and the evidence of what was intended, and which should be applied only to the healing dissensions, discouraging factions, and affording a common centre of appeal to all the upright and well intentioned, was perhaps just the happiest thing that could happen in their circumstances, and such as every honest and intelligent Spaniard must hail with delight.

He could not help perceiving in the conduct of this war, and certainly in much of the language held about it, a certain mixture of that error, which prevailed in many years of the last war, of encouraging sanguine expectations of what was to be done by Austria and other powers, and looking to them for what in many instances ought to have been our own work. Something of that sort prevailed here. With all our talk about Spain, we did not set our shoulders to the wheel, as people would, who felt that they had nothing to trust to, but their own exertions, and who estima-

ted truly what the exertions of this country could do when fairly put forth.

But, the great and pregnant source of error in the conduct of the Honourable Gentlemen, besides the fault of not knowing better, was that which they had in common with many other ministers, and which he had signally witnessed in some of his own time, of mistaking bustle for activity, and supposing that they were doing a great deal, when they were only making a great deal of noise, and spending a great deal of money. While ministers were writing long dispatches, issuing orders in all directions, keeping up clerks to unusual hours, covering the roads with messengers, and putting the whole country in a ferment, they were very apt to fancy that the public service must be making prodigious advances. And their purpose, the purpose of the ministers themselves, might, very possibly, in the mean while, be answered; for the error here stated was not a disinterested one, and one without its design. It was thus, perhaps, that an administration was to acquire the character of vigour! The ministers looked at every measure not with a view to the effect which it was to produce abroad, but to the appearance which it was to make at home: they were more intent upon the richness and costliness of the handle of their weapon than upon the keenness and temper of the blade. The public joined them heartily in the delusion; and as long as that was so, we must expect to see the interests of the country and of the world sacrificed to such misconduct, as was exhibited in the history of this campaign in Spain.

There was another topic upon which he felt it necessary to touch. It had been represented, that throughout the north of Spain there was the greatest possible apathy and want of zeal, and that the Marquis de Romana had confessed it. Now, to say nothing of the gross breach of confidence in quoting what the Marquis de Romana had said, if he had said it in private, or the gross fallacy of quoting what he might have said in a proclamation in a moment of spleen or anger, and for the purpose of stimulating the inhabitants of those provinces to greater activity, he must utterly deny the expressions quoted. There could be nothing more fallacious than to estimate the feelings of a country towards any cause, by the feelings excited in that part of it, which should be exposed to the immediate pressure of an army. If the scene of war, for instance, lay in England, and we had an army of allies, Germans or Russians, or even an army of our own countrymen, acting for our defence, they would not, he apprehended, be very popular, in the places where they were; and there would not be wanting complaints among the farmers, whose provisions were consumed, whose hen-roosts were plundered, whose furni-

ture was stolen, whose ricks were set on fire, and whose wives and daughters might not always be treated with perfect decorum, that the French themselves could not do them greater mischief! Now, if this were true, as it infallibly would be, of English troops upon English ground, might we not suppose that a good deal more of the same sort would happen, both as to the provocation given and the imitation excited by it, when the English troops were to be placed in these circumstances on Spanish ground, and where every cause of dissatisfaction must be aggravated a thousand-fold, by difference of habits and manners, and the want of any common language, by which the parties might understand one another. It must be confessed, too, he was afraid, that we were not the nation who accommodated ourselves best to strangers, who knew best how to conciliate their good-will; and when to all this were added the circumstances in which our army was placed, that we were a retreating army, and an army compelled to retreat with extraordinary rapidity and much consequent disorder, it would not be very surprising, if neither we appeared to the people nor they to us, in form the most advantageous, or such as to render the inhabitants of the towns and villages on the line of our march, a very fair representation of the feelings and sentiments of the mass of people in Spain. On many occasions, from the fault of the commissariat, or from other causes, the soldiers, when they came in at the end of a long march, had nothing provided for them to eat; and were obliged to help themselves. The inhabitants, in their terror, whether they staid or had fled, had locked up their houses, and nothing was to be got but by breaking them open; and it was easy to understand, that when once soldiers, whether from necessity or otherwise, began to break open houses, further irregularities, without disparagement to the discipline of the army, or character of the men, must be expected. The kingdom of Gallicia, in general, was probably a very unfair specimen, as to what was to be looked for from the rest of the country, not so much, perhaps, from the character of the inhabitants, as from the state of society there, where the gentry were few and of little influence, and where there was almost a total want of those classes which might direct and methodize the exertions of the lower orders, or make them sensible even that such exertions were necessary.—To talk of the Spaniards generally, as wanting in zeal or courage or determination to defend their country, was more than any one would venture, after such examples as Saragossa, where a defence was made so far exceeding what was to be expected from a regular army, that one might conceive a general made a peer in this country, for having surrendered Saragossa, in circumstances far short of those in which its inhabitants defended it.

The Right Honourable Gentleman concluded with expressing his determination to support the motion for an Inquiry.

Earl Percy, Mr. Bathurst, and Mr. Hutchinson, supported the motion ; after which a division took place, when there appeared,

For Mr. Ponsonby's motion	127
Against it	<u>220</u>
Majority	<u>93</u>

CONDUCT OF THE DUKE OF YORK.

MARCH 14th, 1809.

On the 8th of March, Mr. Wardle moved the order of the day for taking into consideration the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee who were appointed to investigate the conduct of His Royal Highness the Duke of York, Commander in Chief, with regard to promotions, exchanges, and appointments to commissions in the army and staff of the army, and in raising levies of the army. He then proceeded to recapitulate the evidence, and concluded by moving an Address to His Majesty, which, after noticing the proceedings of the House on this subject, concluded with declaring, "That it is the opinion of this House, that the abuses which they have most humbly represented to His Majesty, could not have prevailed to the extent in which they had been proved to exist, without the knowledge of the Commander in Chief; and that even if, upon any principle of reason or probability, it could be presumed that abuses so various and so long continued could, in fact, have prevailed without his knowledge, such a presumption in his favour would not warrant the conclusion, that the command of the army could, with safety, or ought, in prudence, to be continued in his hands:—That on these grounds and principles His Majesty's faithful Commons most humbly submit their opinion to His Majesty's gracious consideration, that His Royal Highness the Duke of York ought to be deprived of the command of the army."

To this Address, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Perceval) proposed an Amendment, which included the following Resolution, viz. "Resolved, That it is the opinion of this House, after the fullest and most attentive consideration of all the evidence reported to this House, from the Committee appointed to inquire into the conduct of His Royal Highness the Duke of York, that there is no ground for charging His Royal Highness, in the execution of his official duties, as Commander in Chief, with the personal corruption alleged against him in that evidence, or with any connivance at the corrupt and infamous practices which are therein disclosed."

On the 9th the debate was resumed, and Mr. Perceval moved the Amendment which he had proposed on the preceding evening. Mr. Bathurst, taking a middle course, suggested, but did not move an Amendment, recognising the benefits which the service had derived from His Royal Highness's general performance of his duties as Commander in Chief, but regretting "an immoral and unbecoming connexion, which had occasioned an interference in the distribution of military appointments, tending to discredit His Royal Highness's official administration, and to give colour to the most criminal and disgraceful transactions."

On the 10th the question was further debated, and Mr. Banks moved an Amendment, in which, after stating that it had appeared from the evidence that corrupt practices and abuses had unquestionably existed, it was proposed, "to assure His Majesty that it is highly satisfactory to this House to find no ground in any of these proceedings for charging His Royal Highness, the Commander in Chief, with personal corruption or participation in any profits derived through undue means; but that while we readily do justice to the exemplary regularity with which business is conducted in his department, and the salutary regulations which have been introduced by His Royal Highness, some of which are calculated to prevent such practices as have been brought under our review, we are obliged to express our opinion that such abuses could scarcely have prevailed to the extent to which they have been proved to exist, without having excited the suspicion of the Commander in Chief; and we humbly submit to His Majesty, even if it can be presumed that abuses so various and so long continued, could have prevailed without the knowledge of His Royal Highness, whether the command of the army can with propriety be continued, or ought in prudence to remain any longer in his hands." The Amendment concluded with reprobating the example to public morals which the evidence had disclosed.

The discussion was continued on the 13th and 14th March. On the latter of these days, Mr. WINDHAM addressed the Chair in the following speech:

Sir,

I HAVE abstained hitherto from delivering my sentiments to the house, because I felt that it was desirable for me to collect, in the course of the discussion, the opinions of as many different members as possible upon this important, delicate, and difficult question, before I ventured to offer any view of my own upon it. If I am now anxious to state my opinion upon the subject, it is because of the crisis of the proceeding at which the house has arrived; because of the mode of proceeding which is next proposed to be adopted; and because very erroneous opinions have been formed upon that mode of proceeding. But, before I enter upon this consideration, it will first be necessary to inquire what is the actual state of the question. Statements have been made to this house, rather than charges, which impute misconduct to the Commander-in-Chief. An inquiry at the bar of the house has been the consequence, and four modes of proceeding have subsequently been recommended. An Address to His Majesty has been originally proposed, suggesting what measure should be adopted; then came the Resolution of the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer, acquitting His Royal Highness altogether; the third course is that proposed by the Right Honourable Gentleman upon the floor (Mr. Bathurst;) and the last is the Address of the Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Bankes,) containing an opinion respecting the conduct of the Commander-in-Chief, and differing

upon the whole from the original Address. With any one of these modes of proceeding I shall be able, if necessary, to concur, however I may have a preference of one over the other. I speak, of course, of the forms of proceeding, not of the opinions, by which they may be accompanied or intended to be followed, with all of which it will not be possible to concur, because many of them are in contradiction with each other.

There is, however, a higher and more general question of proceeding, paramount to those just enumerated, which it will be necessary previously to discuss, and which I shall endeavour to explain.—There seems to be an intention of calling upon the house to resolve the great subject before them into certain issuable points upon which separate decisions should be taken, and then upon the decisions so taken, and as a consequence derived from them, to ground an Address expressing the opinion of the house as to what ought further to be done.

However plausible this may sound, and however true it may be, that such is the course which each individual will pursue in forming his opinion, I am clear that, as a mode of judging to be adopted by this house, or by any other tribunal consisting of numerous members, it is as little true in theory, as it is conformable to general and established practice. With respect to practice, it is obvious, that it is not in this way that the house determines the numerous complicated questions that are continually before it. For the purpose here considered, it is of no consequence, whether the question is of a judicial nature or of any other. The laws of reasoning, and the rules by which one truth is deduced from another, are the same in all subjects. A question of peace and war may involve in it a great variety of subordinate questions, such as, Whether the war projected is consistent with the good faith of the country, and with subsisting treaties, whether it is consistent with its commercial interests, is likely to prove conducive to its object, &c. &c. Yet the house does not come to a separate decision upon these points, and then from these separate decisions, derive its general conclusion upon the whole. It goes at once to the general conclusion, leaving to each man to adjust in his own mind the value to be attached to each of these separate considerations. In fact, in the very plan now proposed, we no sooner lay down the principle, than we feel ourselves compelled the moment afterwards to abandon it: for if we did not, when we are deciding the question of guilty or not of participation, &c. we must say, guilty or not of participation in the case of Sandon, in the case of Knight, and so on in each case to which the question of participation can apply. I protest, therefore, against the whole of this mode of proceeding, and declare beforehand, that should it be adopted by the house, and should I concur, as I cer-

tainly shall, in acquitting the Duke of York of participation or connivance, I shall not feel myself precluded from taking into account, the presumptions established in those very charges, on which I have so acquitted him, in deciding upon the general question of, Whether or no the Duke of York should be advised to withdraw (or the King be advised to remove him) from the situation of Commander-in-Chief? When I shall have pronounced a verdict of acquittal on all and every one of these charges, I shall have said nothing, that would be inconsistent with the opinion, that the Duke ought, notwithstanding, and with respect to those very charges, no longer to remain in his situation at the head of the army. There would be no difficulty in establishing the truth of the position here laid down, and doing away whatever there was of seeming paradox in it, but I shall forbear from troubling the house for that purpose, as I collect from the gestures of the Honourable Gentlemen, that the contrary is not maintained, and that there is no intention of forcing upon the house a course of proceeding such as I had apprehended.

I shall consider myself, therefore, as at liberty to treat the whole question from the beginning, as one, and not as restricted to the necessity of breaking it into parts, according to a prescribed form, deciding those parts as separate questions, and then, from the result of those separate questions, and the conclusions which the house shall severally have come to upon them, forming my opinion upon the whole. The main question is, what shall the house do in consequence of the body of evidence now brought before it? What steps shall it take? What resolutions shall it come to? What advice shall it give?

In every view, and for every purpose, it is necessary to consider the nature and value of the evidence, the general heads under which it falls, and the main facts which it establishes. After the close examination which it has undergone, I shall be far from feeling it necessary to go into any minute detail; it will be sufficient for me to state such remarks as seem to me at all material in the character and result of the leading parts of it. Among these, Mrs. Clarke's evidence stands foremost. She is the life and soul of the whole. Her testimony, if it is to be received implicitly, is at once conclusive. We are to consider what there may be to render any part of her testimony doubtful.

Her general situation in the cause is certainly such as to expose her to great suspicion. She is so circumstanced as to be open to strong temptations to falsehood, both on the side of interest and of passion: and what ground of assurance is there that these ^{temptations} will have been resisted? She is, in the first place, a woman without that virtue which is the great pride and ornament of sex, and is, in the universal estimation of mankind, the

great foundation and pledge of all others. However it happens, or in whatever way it is to be explained, it must be confessed (without wishing to bear too hard upon the frailties of the sex), that the loss of chastity in women, does carry away with it a great proportion of all their other virtues. But, Mrs. Clarke is a woman who is not only unchaste, but is publicly known to be so; that is to say, who is not only without virtue but without shame; who has long incurred and become familiar to the opprobrium of the world; and has therefore set herself free from another security for right conduct, and one which is hardly less strong than virtue itself. It is impossible to have seen her here without seeing what the effect of her trade has been in hardening her against those feelings, which would have operated on most of her sex.

These are presumptions arising from her general character and habits of life. There are others arising from the particular situation in which she stands with respect to the transactions under discussion. She appears in the character of an accomplice. If the acts charged would be scandalous and flagrant in the person to whom they are imputed, she cannot be blameless or guiltless, who carried on a systematic traffic for procuring them to be done.—Upon this subject of accomplices, of the manner in which they are to be admitted into causes, and of the way in which their evidence is to reckon, we have heard a great deal from those, who should be presumed to understand it, but who certainly seem, on this occasion, only to have given a new proof, that gentlemen of the legal profession do not form always the best conceptions of the principles of their own practice.—It may be said, indeed, of the whole doctrine of evidence, whether as we hear it treated daily by living practitioners, or as it is delivered in books and learned tracts of the most approved authority, that it is, what certain heads of disorder have been said to be with respect to physicians, the *opprobrium jurisconsultorum*. One position laid down has been, that the evidence of an accomplice is to be believed only so far as it is supported by other proofs. If by this is meant only (what it would express however very inaccurately), that no one should be convicted upon the mere testimony of an accomplice, unsupported by other testimony or by other proofs, the position may be readily admitted; but if it is meant that every part of the evidence of an accomplice requires to be so supported, the result must be, that the evidence of an accomplice was of no effect at all, supposing that by support was meant *complete support*, that is to say, evidence so good as to be sufficient of itself. For if by support here is meant only evidence imperfect or doubtful, such as might induce a belief, but not an adequate belief, then this description of the force and value of an accomplice's evidence, is no more than what might seem to be expressed in a simpler and

more intelligible manner, by saying that it was evidence of an inferior kind, which had its weight, but was not fit to be relied on altogether. Whatever its value be, it must be something, otherwise there would be no sense or meaning in admitting it into a cause. If a witness can add to the credit of another's testimony, it must be by the effect of some credit, more or less, that is due to his own. A witness from whom you believe nothing but what you can prove by other means (or who, according to the language that we often hear, is to be believed only so far as he is supported by witnesses that are credible,) is no witness at all.

I do not know, therefore, what can be made of a distinction which a learned judge (Mr. Burton) was endeavouring to set up, of the testimony of accomplices being good with respect to collateral or incidental circumstances, but not so with respect to those main circumstances which go to fix the guilt directly upon the party accused. You either give some degree of credit to the accomplice, or you give none. If none, it is needless to call him. If he is to be credited in any degree, the credit so given him, though possibly not the same on all the points on which he may have to speak, will vary by other rules than the mere application of the point in question to the condemnation or acquittal of the prisoner.—An accomplice, with respect to the mere effect which his testimony will have in influencing belief, is in the state of any other witness, whose credibility, supposing his accuracy to be the same, is to be estimated by his temptations to falsehood, and the probity which he may be supposed to possess, to guard him against such temptation.

So much for the theory. As to the practice, I am afraid, it is sometimes carried as much beyond the limits to which theory would confine it, as there is at other times a desire to make it fall short of them. The case mentioned by my Honourable and Learned Friend (Sir Samuel Romilly) is a strong proof of this. There can be no doubt, that, if the facts stated form the whole of the case, the prisoner was convicted solely upon the evidence of a man, who could not have given that evidence, without confessing himself a participator to the full extent, in the guilt charged. The conviction seems to have been a most improper one, and is not rendered better by the reflection, that the man who could have been so convicted, was certainly not a Commander-in-Chief nor a Governor-General of India.

To return to the case in question. Mrs. Clarke is undoubtedly an accomplice, and on that, as well as on various other accounts, is to be heard with great distrust. But, still, her evidence is not to be rejected nor disregarded: and we are to consider what circumstances there may be to repel or to do away a great part of resumptons arising against her from the causes above stated.

Though it may be too much to say (and far more than we are called upon to say by any evidence before us,) that she is, generally speaking, an unwilling witness; yet we know, of our own knowledge, that she has been so in some instances, and must fairly be said to have given proofs of a great degree of moderation and forbearance. These are virtues often to be found among women whose lives and conduct have not been more regular than Mrs. Clarke's, and which she has displayed in several instances in a very marked manner. She would clearly have suppressed all the circumstances connected with Colonel Tonym's business, if she had not been absolutely forced to produce them by the foolish and scandalous attack made upon her by General Clavering, which completely drove her to the wall, and left her no option between the production of these facts and the confession (which she could hardly be expected to make, at the moment, too, when her evidence was correctly true), that she was a woman wholly undeserving of credit. Her credit, which is impeached by the circumstances in which she stands, is thus in a considerable degree set up again, by the manner in which we have seen her act in those circumstances. She evidently cannot be treated as a woman, who is borne away by a spirit of resentment, which knows no bounds; because she has shown that she is not so borne away, but is restrained by considerations, such as we cannot assume to be stronger than those which, even in a mind as little principled as hers, might prevent the production of evidence, known not to be true.

If such seems to be the balance of the account between the presumptions for and against her credibility, which may be derived from a general view of her situation and conduct, it remains to be considered, how these motives and considerations appear to have operated in point of fact, and what is the general colour and character of her testimony; such as we have heard it delivered, and as we have it now before us. Various attempts have been made to entrap her in her answers, and to find out parts of her testimony in which she may appear to be inconsistent, either with others, or with herself. For my part, I must fairly confess, that these attempts, as far as I can recollect, did not, in any instance, appear to me to be successful. On those points where a difference occurred between her and Mr. Knight, it appeared to me, that Mr. Knight was quite as likely to be mistaken as she; nothing was more easily intelligible than one of those on which so much stress has been laid, as if it were difficult to be understood why she should express an unwillingness to the mention of the matter to the Duke of York. Mrs. Clarke had denied her having expressed any such unwillingness; answering rather to the inference which she saw was intended than to the fact itself;

and committing thereby, if her denial was false, a most unnecessary deviation from truth: for nothing could have been more safe to her, than to admit to the full extent all that Mr. Knight ascribed to her; namely, that she had given a caution to him not to repeat what he had heard, to the Duke of York.—For what is this notion that such a caution could only be necessary, on the supposition that she carefully concealed from His Royal Highness the traffic in which she was engaged? I believe, that she did, in fact, conceal it from the Duke; that is to say, the corrupt part of it. But such a supposition is not necessary, to account for a wish on her part, that what passed in conversation between her and persons whom she was treating with, should not come round to His Royal Highness's ears; because, though he were privy to these things ever so much, there was still reason sufficient, why he should not choose to be known to be privy to them, and might be very angry at the report of any conversation which should seem to fix upon him that knowledge.

Scire meum nihil est, nisi nec scire hoc sciat alter.

I may know that you take money for these services: but do not let any one else know that I know it.

Of a sort equally unimportant were many other of the inaccuracies or inconsistencies, which were supposed to have been discovered in her evidence. They were, many of them, upon points which she had no interest in representing one way more than in another, or on which, when the opposition was to the testimony of others, there was just as much probability of her being right as they. In general, I must fairly say, they were of that sort, which, instead of detracting from the authority of her evidence, only gave to it, in my eyes, a greater character of genuineness and authenticity. I should have suspected it more, had the inaccuracies in it been fewer. There was just about as much incorrectness as might be expected in the answers of a person, who spoke without design or premeditation on transactions some time past, and which, many of them, had not been at the time the subject of particular attention. It was impossible, indeed, not to be struck by the general air of frankness and facility with which her evidence was characterized throughout. There was nothing of stiffness and preparation. There was no time taken to look for an answer, or to give to it any other shape, than that which it first received in her mind. She wrote a running hand. "She poured forth," as a great critic says of one of our poets, "a negligent profusion; certain of the weight, and careless of the stamp."

With this description of the general character of Mrs. Clarke's evidence, on what grounds, it will be asked, do I afterwards reject

the truth of it? And, admitting the truth of it, how can I resist the conclusion, that the Duke of York is guilty to the full extent? The answer is, that I do admit the truth of her testimony in all the parts to which the description, above given, will apply; but that the description does not, nor by its nature can, apply to those parts by which alone the Duke of York must stand convicted.

It has not been observed sufficiently, that Mrs. Clarke's evidence must be divided into two great heads, very unequal in bulk, and very unequal in consequence; and the largest, as it happens, not that which is most important. In all that part of the case, being nine-tenths or ninety-nine hundredths of the whole, which relates to the existence of a corrupt traffic for the disposal of commissions, and to the transactions which took place in consequence, Mrs. Clarke's evidence deserves the character which I have given of it; and is, I believe, true. But all this, without further aid, tells nothing as to the object of the prosecution, viz. the guilt of the Duke of York; whom no extent or variety in the existence of the abuse will ever touch, unless it can be shown, in some degree, that he was, or ought to have been, cognizant of it. Now, this it is, that makes what may be called the second part of Mrs. Clarke's evidence, to the truth of which, no inference can be drawn from the truth of the first; for it is subject to none of the same constraints, nor can be judged of by any of the same criteria. It consists of half a dozen sentences, in which she speaks without the possibility of detection or confutation, or indeed, even of contradiction, except from the party himself. When she has told with perfect truth all her transactions with Knight, with Donovan, with Sandon, with Clavering, nay, many with the Duke of York himself, that which is to give effect to the whole, which is necessary to make any part bear upon its object, is a declaration that she in private conversations (conversations so private, that nobody was, or, it may be, could have been present,) had made known all that she had been doing, to the Duke of York. Without this, all the story comes to nothing: and what connexion is there between the truth of the story, and the truth of the declaration of her having told that story to a particular person? Mrs. Clarke (I am among the first to admit) delivers her evidence throughout with the confidence and facility of a person who was speaking truth: but the presumption thence arising, as to the actual truth, is not the same in all parts of her evidence. Where it relates to matters falling within the cognizance of others, she proceeds fearlessly, she speaks confidently, because she is in fact speaking truly; but in other parts, far more material, she may speak with confidence only because she knows that, whether speaking truly or falsely, she is safe from detection. No one can ever convict her as to the truth or falsehood of declarations, said to have passed

only between her and the Duke of York. Here she is covered with a shield of impenetrable darkness: she may say whatever she pleases; conviction can never reach her. In all the other parts of her evidence, she might safely tell the truth, because the truth was abundantly sufficient for all purposes, if it could be shown only that the Duke was acquainted with it.

It must never be forgot, that the proof of this last point, namely, the knowledge which the Duke had of the criminal parts of these transactions, rests entirely upon Mrs. Clarke, with no other support than what she can derive from Miss Taylor. I am far from approving the attempts that have been made to discredit and disparage Miss Taylor, or from thinking that they have been at all successful. Indeed, their success would have been, in a great measure, their justification. If Miss Taylor's character was really bad, so as to render her undeserving of credit, the interests of justice required that it should be shown to be so, however the means employed for that purpose might be attended with consequences painful or prejudicial to her. But the attempts were neither successful, nor did they seem, many of them, to have been fairly directed to their object. What idea could we entertain of Miss Taylor's credit being destroyed as a witness, because she had not the virtue (if virtue even it would have been, in all the circumstances of the case) to break off all communication with Mrs. Clarke, her relation and benefactress, the moment she found she had formed an improper connexion with the Duke of York? This might have been right: I will not say, that it was not: but it was a stricter right than we were accustomed to exact from persons from whom it might more fairly be looked for. Would we take this rule in our hand, and apply it to the trial of all that might be found in higher life?

The fact is, that if Miss Taylor's testimony is to be arraigned, it must be on the ground of circumstances in the testimony itself, and not of the person who gave it. The case here is the very reverse of the former. Mrs. Clarke is a bad witness giving a good testimony. Miss Taylor is a good witness giving a testimony liable to considerable suspicion. Let Miss Taylor's evidence be examined in this view. The most unpleasant part of it is the expression, "How did he behave to you, Darling?" Many Gentlemen have thought that this might be explained to mean, what was his general conduct towards you, in respect to being importunate and troublesome? But I confess that it was difficult not to understand the word "behave" in a more restricted and technical sense, well understood among persons in the class of life in which Miss Taylor might be placed; and it is no answer to say, that Miss Taylor, or those whose expressions she was repeating, might not be persons very nice and critical in the use of their

terms. There are no persons more correct in the use of such terms as they employ at all, than those whose vocabulary is small, and who use it without reflection or premeditation, merely to express ideas of daily occurrence, in conversation with persons as little studious of language as themselves. There is nothing so true as habit. While there is no ambition in the speakers to speak beyond themselves, the same words are used to denote the same ideas, and contract by use a degree of precision, which can never be given them by thought and study. I would pit the most illiterate person in this country, against the most learned professor of Dublin or Edinburgh, in the use of the words *shall* and *will*; and if I had heard in any part of the evidence, those expressions, now so familiar, of a person having done this or that "*before going down stairs, before getting into the coach,*" I should have been sure that they were either not truly repeated, or were the expressions of a native of this part of the island. I cannot satisfy myself at all, therefore, that if this expression of "how did he behave?" was truly cited, it did not signify all that was meant to be imputed to it. But I may easily doubt, whether the expression was truly cited; and whether in the recollection of a conversation, not very recent, and having nothing at the time, as far as appeared, to impress that particular part immediately on the mind of the witness, a little change may not have been introduced, insensible at the moment, but so establishing itself after a few repetitions, as to maintain its ground against any subsequent effort of recollection to set it right. I cannot lay much stress upon a circumstance, which to some Gentlemen has appeared of importance, viz. that Miss Taylor should have recollected so accurately the particulars of this conversation, and have forgot so much of what had passed at later periods. Of irregularities of this sort, no one can fail to find examples in himself every day. The real circumstance of surprise and suspicion is, that Miss Taylor should have so little recollection of what had been said to her subsequently in respect to this very conversation. She comes here with her story evidently ready cut and dry. It was not a point that had arisen unexpectedly in the course of examination, and on which she had related what her recollection furnished at the moment, as was often the case with Mrs. Clarke; but she is brought to tell this very thing, which must therefore have been the subject of previous conversation, and then seems to recollect nothing of what had at any time passed upon it. It is impossible not to regard a testimony so circumstanced, considering what it is in the case, from what quarter it comes, and in what manner it is produced, with some degree of suspicion; and to suspect here is to suspect the whole foundation of the question. The persons who look at this case loosely and carelessly, in the way in which it is looked at by ninety

parts out of a hundred of what are called the public, never perceive upon what a slender foundation the whole rests, upon what slender pivots it is made to turn; they see a vast deal of charge, a vast deal of suspicion, a great mass of abusive practices, a great variety of facts, much the greater part of them proved; and they conclude from hence, that a great portion of the charge is proved. But when the matter comes to be examined as those ought to examine it who are to sit in judgment upon it, it is found that the only two points in which this bulky and imposing mass is made to touch the Duke of York, are in the evidence of Miss Taylor and Mrs. Clarke; Mrs. Clarke speaking to communications made by her to the Duke with no person present, and Miss Taylor coming in in support of her friend, in a solitary instance, and where the whole force of her testimony depends upon her correctness in the report of a particular expression. The passage in the note to General Clavering, I think, proves nothing but that which has been proved over and over, and need not be disputed; namely, that Mrs. Clarke made applications to the Duke for objects of this sort, and that the Duke did not always prevent her, as indeed it would be difficult for him to do, from talking to him upon such subjects. What is wanted is a direct proof, or adequate presumption, that the Duke accepted her recommendations, knowing them to have been obtained corruptly; and evidence to this effect we have none, except in the declarations of Mrs. Clarke, and the story, which I have been just examining, of Miss Taylor.

This was all that we had upon that head in the shape of testimony. There was, it was urged, the general presumption, arising from the rate at which the Duke of York saw his mistress live, compared with the money which he allowed her. Knowing that the one was inadequate to the other, the allowance to the expense, he must have been satisfied, it is said, that she had indirect means of profit; and these could be no other than bribes received for the exertion of her influence. It may be true, that the Duke of York ought to have made this calculation; but nothing appears to me more natural and likely than that in point of fact he did not. Persons bred to small fortunes and to economical habits, may find a difficulty of believing how any one could mistake in the proportion between his income and expenditure: yet, surely, examples of such mistakes are not wanting, nor fail to occur daily, even in the lower walks of life; and much more may they be expected in persons placed from their infancy above the want of money, and whose minds have been directed to any thing rather than the management of their own affairs. There is no limit to the errors which such persons may commit, when endeavouring to form such estimates; and who knows that the Duke of York ever thought upon the subject? He had not only his

habits of idleness, but his habits of diligence, to contend with; and if any one would form to himself an idea of the business which a Commander in Chief has to go through every day of his life, and which the Duke of York does go through, he would neither wonder at, nor be much disposed to blame, any instance of ignorance or inattention that might occur in the management of his private affairs. Much of Mrs. Clarke's expenses, too, never came within the cognizance of her protector, and many of them possibly were never intended to do so. Her great dinners were all necessarily given when he was not present.

The reasoning, therefore, that would fix upon the Duke of York the gross charge of having connived at his mistress's corruptions, inasmuch as he must be presumed to have known, that she could not otherwise have gone on without a greater debt than she was found, in fact, to have contracted, is of a nature infinitely too loose and uncertain to be allowed of for that purpose, whatever shade of suspicion Gentlemen thinking more of it than I do, may consider it as casting over the whole of the case.

Here the case may be considered as closing, respecting that part of the charge on which the illustrious personage in question, and all those interested in his reputation, must feel beyond comparison the most jealous; I mean that gross and foul part which would impute to the Royal Duke the idea of participation or connivance. The whole of this, with the aid of such a surmise as that which I have recently adverted to, rests on the sole assertion of Mrs. Clarke, or, if you please, of Mrs. Clarke, backed by Miss Taylor. All the abundant proofs contained in the other parts of the evidence, the direct, the circumstantial, the proof by inference, the proof by assertion, tell nothing as to the point really in question, namely, the knowledge of these things (meaning always the corrupt part of them) by the Duke of York. With all your efforts, you never can get beyond the evidence of Mrs. Clarke and Miss Taylor; Miss Taylor, moreover, contributes nothing but a single and doubtful sentence. Yet, with three-fourths of those whom we hear talk upon the subject, the case is thought to be proved with a force of evidence that nothing can resist. There never was such a strange and blundering misconception; Unless, indeed, it shall be said, that such are always the misconceptions on subjects of legal proof, by those who have not the means, or will not take the pains, or do not possess the habits or talents, to examine them with legal accuracy. The proofs of the existence of the thing, are given throughout, as the proofs of the Duke of York's knowing it. Nobody ever doubts of the existence of the thing—that there was a corrupt traffic carried on by Mrs. Clarke and others. Of that we have evidence without end; even if it were necessary to ask for any other than that of Mrs. Clarke

herself. There her evidence is conclusive: it is the very best that can be had in any case. But her testimony, which is the best for that purpose, namely, to prove her own practices, is altogether as bad, when applied to the other purpose, which is all, however, that we have to do with, of proving by her *ipse dixit*, that the Duke of York was privy to them. Upon this evidence, however, we are now required to come to that conclusion.

The other heads of charge in the cause are, comparatively with these, and as I think, in themselves, of so little magnitude, that though they have assumed a great consequence in the eyes of some Gentlemen, I cannot bring myself to dwell upon them at much length. The moral part of the question, as it is called, is one that, many Gentlemen think, ought of itself to call for the animadversion of the house. I certainly do not mean to set up a justification of that part of the Royal Personage's conduct; but not feeling that this is a matter on which the house is called upon to animadvert, I do not feel that I *am* setting up a justification of it, by endeavouring to dissuade the house from taking any cognizance of it. Something must, after all, be yielded to the general habits and manners of the world; and something also to the situation of persons placed in the rank of life of the Royal Duke; who, being deprived originally in marriage, of much of that free choice which is the happy privilege of persons in humbler stations, ought not, perhaps, to be called upon for an equally rigorous discharge of the duties attached to that state. There must be something, moreover, of general harmony and uniformity in the conduct both of individuals and of collective bodies, if they would wish either to gain credit for their motives, or to give authority to their example; or not to risk the exciting feelings of ridicule, where they are anxious to impress sentiments of deference and respect. I am afraid, that the present state of manners in this country will not admit well of a solemn resolution of the House of Commons to censure the Commander in Chief for keeping a mistress. If this were true in general, there is nothing to render the present instance an exception, so far, at least, as relates to those decent precautions and observances which, by preventing the evil example from becoming public, do away, it must be confessed, a considerable portion of the mischief. It appears, by the evidence, that the Duke, in his visits to his mistress, preserved as much secrecy as it was easy for him to do. He never went in his carriage, or on horseback; he never was attended but by one servant, and that servant always the same. If a Commander in Chief is to have a mistress, one hardly knows how he should regulate his misconduct, so as to render it less injurious to the public morals. Those, indeed, who urge this topic, hardly seem to consider it as a ground of charge which the house would have done right to take

up originally, though they are willing now to treat it as a substantive charge. By the bulk of the house it seems only to be considered as a subject of animadversion, in as far as it has practically led to consequences injurious to the public service. These consequences are of two sorts; first, the injury done to the service by the adoption of recommendations, likely, in many instances, to lead to improper appointments. Secondly, the scandal given to the service and the country, by the suspicion that appointments were to be so obtained. From the former of these the Duke of York stands, in a great measure, acquitted by the very evidence brought forward to condemn him; because Mrs. Clarke herself states throughout, that the recommendations, which she delivered in, could only expect to succeed on the supposition that there was, in the things themselves, nothing improper; nor do I know, that in the case produced, there is any in which this condition does not appear to have been observed, except one, which I will speak to presently. I do not mean, however, to justify that sort of influence, which seems here to have been permitted, even when guarded by the condition supposed to have been annexed to it; because there is often a wide difference, if I may so say, between what is not improper, and what is proper. The mistress might recommend a man to whom there was no formal or official objection, but who yet was very far from being the person whom the Commander in Chief ought to have selected. There is no greater abuse either in the army or in the whole service of the state, nor which leads to more extensive consequences, but which is, at the same time, more inherent in the nature of things, and more impossible to be got at, than the abuse of patronage, in giving to favour what ought to be given only to merit. But I wish I could think that this was confined to Commanders in Chief's mistresses, and that in failure of theirs, other influences would not succeed, by which, in the allotment of promotions and preferments, merit would be quite as much disregarded. Would the influence of members of this house, for instance, be solely guided by the consideration of merit? Would the recommendations of fashionable ladies in the society of this town, be always directed to purer objects, or not sometimes to the very same, as those with which Mr. Donovan or Captain Sandon supplied Mrs. Clarke?

Of persons chosen, or of things done at her recommendation, absolutely out of rule, and which can be described as being improper in themselves, I know, as I have said, but of one or two. French's levy, which occurs to me at the moment, as additional to the one to which I have before alluded, is a very bad case, and such as may be well suspected to have originated in influence like that of Mrs. Clarke's. I have been long acquainted with its merits,

and have contributed possibly in no small degree to its downfall, by papers respecting it which I (or an Honourable Friend of mine) have moved for in this house. Nor can I profess that I am satisfied with any of the explanations that have been offered; though, here again, I should say, that those explanations were not so insufficient, nor the vices of the measure so evident from the beginning, as to make the adoption of it impossible except for some unworthy and sinister purpose. The other case is of a different description, of a description, indeed, peculiar to itself, and upon which, therefore, I shall say a few words. It is the case so much insisted upon of Samuel Carter. There is no case in which the Duke of York lies so much at the mercy of his accusers, but upon which he might so much have hoped for that mercy, which however he certainly has not found. It is a case for which there is no defence, but for which, in every generous and liberal mind, I should have thought, there would have been all possible excuse. Is there a bad motive to be found in it from beginning to end? Mrs. Clarke had here none of those interested motives, which were apparent and were avowed in other instances. She had no money to make; no favourite to serve; no one whom she could wish to benefit but from motives that did her credit, and which belong to that part of character which is often found not to be lost when other virtues are no more. Had the Duke of York any bad motive? A compliance with the wishes of a mistress is surely not criminal, where those wishes are such as would do no discredit to a woman the most virtuous. But the thing itself, it will be said, was wrong. It was an indignity and insult to the army, to put among its officers a person taken from the condition of a servant, and that, too, a servant in the family of your mistress: a sentiment, which would probably in conversation be expressed in shorter and more forcible terms. The observation would be more just, if it could be added with truth, that such a principle had ever for a moment been avowed: but what is done clandestinely, and with a purpose of being for ever concealed, though it may be an injury, can hardly, even in propriety of language, be called an insult. As for the injury, it must here, as in every other instance, be estimated by the peculiar circumstances of the case; and who shall say, that there are not daily admitted into the army, and unavoidably admitted, persons more discordant from its character and manners, than (it might happen) the person here in question? He is stated to have been well brought up, to have been well disposed: he was probably, though illegitimate, the son of an officer, and of an officer who had claims upon the service, and who, though too poor to educate this young man as his own son, had not so entirely neglected him, as not to have qualified him in some sort for what fortune

might do for him. While those who wish to depress him to the utmost, with a view of giving to the charge every thing that can be most invidious, are studiously characterising him as a foot-boy, they are not aware, that what they mean is the greatest aggravation of the act, is in fact a mitigation of it. To have been a foot-boy is much less than to have been a foot-man. The circumstance of the duration of the time is not little: no one can be a foot-boy for very long. He will not be equally known to have been so, nor (which is not of less importance) will he be equally remembered. He will not be equally liable to be recognised, by his companions, walking into the parlours and drawing-rooms of those houses, where he has formerly waited in the lobby. But what is still more important, he will not have been equally contaminated by the manners and habits of that condition of life. Every one has done and suffered in his youth without degradation, what would be disgraceful and intolerable at a more advanced period. The stains contracted in youth may be purged off and disappear before the boy becomes a man. The mark wears out of his mouth; and there is no reason not to believe, that, but for this unfortunate inquiry, and the very unnecessary and cruel manner in which the fact has been brought forth, the appointment of this young man would have been an act perfectly innocent as to its consequences, neither injuring any interest nor shocking any feeling, which persons most jealous of the honour of the army could have entertained. On the point ~~just~~ touched, upon the manner in which this fact had been brought ~~out~~ but, it is impossible not to contrast the conduct of many Gentlemen upon this occasion with their language respecting Miss Taylor. I have already said, that I disapprove many of the attempts made to discredit Miss Taylor, and to force into view circumstances of her history and family, which she has been naturally studious to conceal. But why do I disapprove these attempts? Because I think that, while painful and injurious to her, they were unnecessary to the cause. But what shall be said, in this view, of the conduct pursued towards Mr. Samuel Carter? Is it less cruel and cutting to his feelings, an officer bearing His Majesty's commission, to have these circumstances of his early life brought to light, for which certainly he is not blameable; and himself held out as a disgrace to his profession, so that, being thus branded, he may find it impossible to remain in it? Here is a pretty good attack upon his feelings and upon his interests into the bargain. And where is the necessity for it? Mrs. Clarke has expressly stated, that she entreated and stipulated, as far as she could, that Samuel Carter's case should not be brought forward. The Honourable Mover therefore, if this assertion of Mrs. Clarke is not a mere pretence and grimace, has not acted with much gratitude towards his wit-

ness and informant, even if he should be able to acquit himself upon the score of good faith. But what was the necessity of this for the interests of the cause? What is the necessity, compared with that which may justly be alleged in the case of Miss Taylor? Was not it charge enough against the Duke of York, if it could not be fairly made out, that he had connived at the sale of his patronage, for the purpose of putting money into his mistress's pocket, but that you must take in, merely *ad invidiam*, and to excite against him the clamours of the army, and of those who had the honour of the army at heart, that, without any such base motive, and through mere compassion and kindness, he had bestowed a commission upon a person, whose condition of life, if known, would make the appointment highly offensive? But the importance of Miss Taylor's credit and evidence to the cause is of another kind. She is the sole witness that came in aid of Mrs. Clarke, in that part of her testimony, which went to fix upon the Duke of York a privity to her corrupt dealings; and Mrs. Clarke, as that statement implies, and as I have largely discussed before, was the person upon whom the whole of the cause in that respect rested. It is of vital consequence therefore, that Miss Taylor's credit should be sifted to the bottom; and those gentlemen have had a fair excuse to make, who in pursuit of that object may have pushed their inquiries a few degrees beyond what is absolutely necessary. Yet we have all heard, how pathetic the lamentations were, which were poured forth over the sufferings of Miss Taylor, and how fierce the indignation was against those who were in any degree the cause of them, while in the same breasts, the most stoical apathy had prevailed towards the wounds, so unsparingly and wantonly inflicted on Mr. Carter, who seemed to be of no more account with the Honourable Gentlemen, than a mere stock or stone, forming a very fit weapon to be hurled at the head of the Duke of York, but having no capacity of feeling or of being hurt himself. I should have liked a little more impartiality in the feelings as well as in the arguments of the Honourable Gentlemen alluded to.—It does not appear, though the fact may be otherwise, that this influence of Mrs. Clarke, however improperly admitted, or by whatever causes put in motion, has produced any worse appointments or led to any more exceptionable arrangements, than might have been likely to happen had she been wholly out of the question. Except in the two cases referred to, viz. those of Carter and French's levy, there is nothing that seemed even to call for explanation. Still it would have been a great evil and scandal, if the Commander in Chief's mistress was to be the channel of application and favour, in whatever manner she might have used her influence. That she should never be allowed to open her lips upon such subjects, that no

friend or connexion of her's should ever obtain through her means what he might have obtained at the recommendation of any one else, is a degree of strictness which it would be needless to require, because it is impossible to be hoped for. To exact it would only be to say in other words that no person having patronage to dispose of should ever keep a mistress: because, as long as that evil should exist, the existence of influence to such an extent as was here supposed, could hardly fail to make part of it. That an opinion prevailed of an influence to a far greater extent being possessed and exercised by Mrs. Clarke, and that many persons, not likely to part with their money lightly, did advance considerable sums under that persuasion, is to me no convincing proof that the thing was true: because there is no folly so great, into which the love of gain and the greediness of pursuit do not betray even what are called sober people; as we see daily in lotteries, and in the numerous bubbles which are continually occurring: and because there is no opinion more prevalent, among certain classes of people (judging, it may be presumed, from their own feelings and practices,) than that there is not any thing of any sort which is not to be had for money. Of this we have had the most striking proofs in facts that had come out in the course of this very inquiry, but without making part of the cause itself. What can be more striking in this view, than the conduct of that wretched creature Beasley, who thought that he had nothing to do, but to go with his money in his hand, and purchase a piece of church-preferment from the Duke of Portland. If any one believes that these things are done, or any thing having the most distant resemblance to them, by persons, I won't say of the rank and character of the Duke of Portland, but having any claim to the character of a gentleman, and filling any office of credit in the state, he may believe that the prevalence of the opinion is an additional presumption of the reality of the thing; but otherwise, it tells only in the way in which I have cited it; namely, to show what the gross and foolish ideas are which are entertained upon this subject, even by persons from whom better might be expected. It is idle to say, that experience would soon teach them; that they would soon learn by the event, whether the methods which they employed were successful or not. In the first place, the persons are not necessarily the same; but if they were, how numerous have been the instances at all times and on all subjects, practical as well as philosophical, where many have gone on upon a supposed experience, and have imagined a connexion between the effect produced and the means employed, which yet has had no existence. Half the great delusions of the world are of no other character: they see the fact, and they suppose the cause. These people give money to procure promotion; and promotion is often

procured; but in many instances (as we have seen,) because the applications are of a sort, which would succeed equally in any other hands. Still the man who has given the money will, for that very reason, and that he may not stand as a dupe in his own opinion, be willing, and even desirous, to believe, that it is his money that has done the business. But the most conclusive proof of the facility with which men delude themselves upon these subjects is, the fact which we have in the very cause before us, namely, that people went on in their applications and in their offers of money to Mrs. Clarke, after her connexion with the Duke of York had ceased, and when her influence of consequence was at an end. The fact that the Duke of York had got another mistress, and the inference from thence that the former mistress would hardly retain much influence, were neither of them, one should think, so difficult, the one to be ascertained by inquiry, and the other by reasoning, as to have escaped those sagacious men, who, it is said, never lay out their money but upon good grounds; yet we see that, somehow or another, men were not wanting, whether sagacious or not I leave to others to determine, who continued to place their hopes in, and to advance their money to Mrs. Clarke, when her means of serving them had become entirely extinct. We should no longer, therefore, lay any stress on the argument, that the influence must have existed, for that otherwise, men would not have gone on laying out their money in purchasing it. The probability is, that there is not a single man in office who has not some one about him who is selling every day the exercise of an influence over him, of which the principal has not the least perception.—Of this sort might very well be the influence supposed to be exercised by Mrs. Clarke, who, though she actually had, I have no doubt, *some* influence, yet might very well by a dextrous management of her applications, by a judicious choice of her instances, by accommodating skilfully her language among her expectants, to what she could draw from her Royal Friend of the state of the fact, contrive to give to herself an appearance of ten times as much as she had, and to effect that, with the possession of some real influence, which so many accomplish without any at all.

The acts here supposed, as they apply directly to the question of the Duke of York's knowledge of what was passing, connect themselves naturally with another topic nearly akin to it, which I forgot to introduce in its proper place, and which has been much agitated under the name of connivance. Many Gentlemen have thought that a distinction can be taken between connivance and criminal connivance. I for one am not at all interested in such a distinction, because I am prepared to deny connivance altogether.

I doubt indeed, whether the distinction can be successfully made.

If the etymology of the word is to be our guide, it is as difficult to split a *wink*, as to split a hair: and if we are to follow the ordinary acceptation of it, the distinction became impossible, for connivance by the very force of the term is commonly made to include in it the idea of criminality. In that view to attempt to separate connivance from criminal connivance is to attempt to separate a thing from itself. But if nothing more is meant, than that men turn their eyes unwillingly to facts, the existence of which would give them pain, that they are slow to admit unwelcome truths, there is nothing more easily understood or more familiar to every man's observation and practice; not in cases only where no criminality exists, but where from the nature of the thing none can possibly be suspected. What cases are more familiar than those of persons resisting to the last moment the belief of misconduct in those near and dear to them? not because they are desirous of its continuance, but on the contrary, because the existence and continuance of it is a subject of the greatest dread, is the greatest affliction that can befall them. Will any one say of such persons that this slowness of belief, this unwillingness to be convinced of the misconduct of their wives or sons, is criminal connivance, and that they are parties to these acts which they deprecate? Are people criminal parties to the dreadful maladies that threaten their own existence, because they shun enquiry into them, because they long disguise them to themselves and conceal them from others, because they dread to take opinions, for fear of what those opinions may discover to them?—a species of connivance, it is to be feared, to which numbers are daily falling victims, to whom, whatever else may be imputed to them, it would never certainly be imputed, that they are friends to the evils, which they thus avoid to acknowledge. A blindness of this description is very likely to have existed in the instance in question, and may account for much of that with which Gentlemen seem to have been so much embarrassed, between the unwillingness of imputing to the Royal Person any thing so shocking as a wilful tolerance of such abuses, and the difficulty of believing that no suspicion of their existence ever entered his mind. A suspicion may very possibly have entered it, and have passed away, as such suspicions often do, without leaving any trace behind, or have been dismissed, as men do subjects that they are afraid to contemplate. We may surely allow to the Duke of York as much incredulity about Mrs. Clarke's infidelities in respect to bribes as about her infidelities of another sort. If he could be so blind as not to suspect her with Dowler, where suspicion might be expected to be pretty much awake, we surely have no right to presume that he must have been so vigilant and clear-sighted with respect to her transactions with Donovan and Sandon.

An observation of a contrary tendency has just occurred to me, which though not very important, nor occurring in its proper place, I do not care to omit.—In the endeavours to discredit Mrs. Clarke's testimony through the medium of instances in which she has evidently not spoken the truth, sufficient stress has not been laid upon the circumstance of her evidence not being upon oath: nor, except by my Learned Friend (Sir Samuel Romilly), has the effect of that circumstance been properly argued. It is not sufficient to say that if the parts of her evidence in which she has departed from truth, (as where she denied having seen Dowler, &c.) were given not upon oath, so likewise were all the other; that the proportion of the credit due to her in the different parts of her testimony is in consequence the same, so that she, who in an evidence, not delivered on oath, speaks what is false in one part, is as little to be credited in another, as she, who forswears in one part, is to be believed on her oath in another. This proportion does not hold good. It is obvious that it does not, by the common practice of life, without entering into the argument upon the subject. There are a thousand licensed deviations from truth by persons not speaking on oath, which do not in the smallest degree impeach the veracity of these persons when speaking, though still not upon oath, or any grave or important occasion. The principle plainly is, that men, when speaking not upon oath, think themselves authorized to exercise a discretion, founded on a consideration of the subject and of the circumstances, or of the degree in which a strict conformity to truth is exacted from them. A deviation in one part therefore implies no failure of that sense of duty, which should ensure veracity in another. 'On oath' on the contrary is understood, and meant to have the effect of excluding all discretion. In evidence on oath all deviations from truth are alike; *omnia peccata erant paria*. The common expression 'enough to swear by,' may be traced to that root—the consequence is, that he who swears false in any part of a testimony may justly be suspected of swearing false in every other. He who offends against the law in any part is guilty of the breach of the whole law. Mrs. Clarke's credit therefore in my opinion is not to be impeached, at least not materially so, in consequence of the deviations alluded to, as it would have been had she been speaking on oath—the grounds of my distrust (it is not necessary for me to say disbelief), of my refusal to consider her evidence as conclusive, is, that she is not entitled to be believed on her own mere assertion, in circumstances where she has the strongest temptations to falsehood, and where she knows, that, say what she will, she is secure from all possibility of detection.

It does not occur to me, though many smaller points have, I am aware, been omitted, that there is any thing important with

which it is necessary for me further to trouble the house, on this great division of the cause, viz. what is the opinion, which the house ought to form, of the guilt or innocence of the Duke of York in respect to participation or connivance? When I give a decided negative to each of these charges, it still remains to be considered, agreeably to the principle for which I have strongly contended in the beginning, what it is fit for the house to do, in respect to the continuance of His Royal Highness in the high and confidential situation which he has held. Nothing is more clear than that the degree of proof necessary to convict a person of a crime, is far different from that which is sufficient for the removal of him from a situation of trust and confidence. The removal of persons from such situations, however painful to the persons removed, and so far partaking of the character of punishment, is often a matter merely optional, and which requires no reason to be assigned; and even where reasons are necessary, or ought to be assigned, as in great public concerns, they are of a sort wholly different from those, which are required in cases of criminal judgment, that is to say, where, for alleged offences, pain or loss is inflicted on an individual, in violation of rights which he would otherwise have possessed. Who ever thought that a judicial process was necessary to induce this house to concur in an address, entreating His Majesty that he would remove his ministers? It may be fit that ministers should be removed, not only without a crime proved, but without a crime alleged. Though I should dislike the case, it is impossible to deny, that ministers, with all the merit that men can possess, may become unfit for their offices, may be rendered incapable of serving the country, merely because the country, on grounds the most erroneous, has chosen to consider them so. I deprecate (nobody more) the sacrificing any one to public opinion, nor should any thing induce me to do so, in a matter properly judicial. It is for this reason that I behold with indignation the attempts made out of doors, and countenanced, I am sorry to say, within doors likewise, to awe this house in the decision, which we are to give, by the threat of popular displeasure; that is to say, to set us, as judges, to try a question, and then tell us what verdict we are to give. If it is possible for any attempt to be more insulting and audacious, for any submission to be more degrading than another, it is the attempt thus made, and the submission thus expected, and which many Gentlemen seem to think was expected justly. I will not suppose that any instance of such a degrading and criminal acquiescence can exist, but if there does, it is certainly not to be looked for among those, who acquit the Duke of York, but must be found, if at all, on the contrary side, and among those who are most inclined to vapour about their independence, and to talk of votes being given under an influence

foreign from that of the merits of the question. This I say as applicable particularly to the judicial part of the question, by which I mean the judgment to be pronounced on the question of guilty or not guilty of connivance or participation; but a compliance with popular opinion merely as such, that is to say, as affecting the situation and interests of the person so complying, is hardly less base, to whatever part of the question it applies. When I talk of public opinion as deserving of any consideration, it is upon the grounds which I have stated, not as affecting the individual giving his judgment, but as applying to the subject on which the judgment is to be given. A great distinction must likewise be made, as to the nature and character of the public opinion supposed. Is it the mere cry of ignorance or malevolence; of wantonness or of faction; the clamour of persons having their own ends to answer, and not believing what they say; and of others, believing only because they wish the facts to be true, and are delighted with any thing which tends to lower the great to a level with themselves? Or does the opinion in question include in it much of the sound sense and sober discretion of the country, and proceed from persons not ill qualified to judge, nor likely to have their judgment warped by undue feelings and motives? If the public opinion is in any considerable degree of the latter description; as cannot, I fear, be denied; attention is due to it, both on account of the persons themselves, and because, as the very statement implies, an opinion of that sort can not well exist, without some plausible grounds, that it is founded on truth. But, here again, a material question arises. Are the grounds, thus supposed, the mere combination of extraneous circumstances, or are they produced by the conduct of the party himself, acting improperly, though possibly not in a way really to merit the suspicions which he has excited? However hard it is that any one should fall a sacrifice to unjust suspicions, the hardship is less, and the danger to society less, when the suspicion is grounded on acts of the party, and those acts such as are in their own nature culpable. No one can claim from society the same protection against the consequences of his own misconduct, as is due to a person, who if not wholly guilty, is wholly innocent. This is the distinction which I took and acted upon in the case of a Noble Lord which formerly fell under the cognizance of this house. I declared at the time my persuasion, that the Noble Lord had not been guilty of the gross part of the charge: but I could not deny that ground was laid for the suspicion, by conduct of the Noble Lord which it was impossible to justify, namely, by the continued departure which he had permitted from the rule laid down in his own Act. Whatever therefore my own conviction might be, I could not deny the justness of the suspicion on the part of those, who might

have less opportunity of knowing the Noble Lord than I had : and to that suspicion so formed, so much deference was due, as in combination with the misconduct, which was admitted, warranted the judgment which the house pronounced, even in the view of those, who, like me, might acquit the Noble Lord of the grosser part of that which the suspicion imputed to him. The suspicion was just, in respect to those who entertained it, though it might not be just, in point of fact, in respect to the Noble Lord. The same reasoning is applicable to the present case. The Royal Personage must abide the consequences of such a connection as he has formed, and the opportunities which he has afforded to such a testimony as has been given against him. It is not fit that a person of his description and situation should be allowed with impunity to place himself in a state in which suspicions of the most injurious nature can be entertained against him, by persons of good intentions and of reasonably sound and good judgment. 'Cæsar's wife ought not to be suspected.' While I am anxious, therefore, that the house should declare emphatically its disbelief of the accusations brought against His Royal Highness, I should hear, I must confess, with great delight, that no necessity existed for any further opinion, but that the Royal Personage had of himself decided to quit a situation, which he could not hold, with satisfaction to himself, longer than while he could hold it to the general satisfaction of the country. Such a decision could not be construed as admitting in the smallest degree the truth of any thing that has been charged against him. Did it contain such an admission, I should find it impossible to recommend the adoption of it. It is a submission to public opinion, it is not a submission of an unworthy sort, nor to those parts of public opinion, which are undeserving of consideration. Nothing can do more credit to the feelings of the country, nor at the same time show more strongly the general purity of the administration of its affairs, than the commotion excited by any thing that has the appearance even of a departure from that purity. It is a feeling, which one cannot wish less, however the effects of it may be at times irregular, and productive of injustice in particular instances. A homage paid to such a feeling is no admission of the truth of its application in the particular case.

This is all with which I wish to trouble the house on the question itself. A very few observations only, I am desirous to offer, in answer to some reflections which have been cast on the part taken in this business, by those with whom I have in general the pleasure to act. They are accused of having been slow to come forward, or to give to the Honourable Mover that support at the time, which they are now, it is said, eager to proffer when he no longer stands in need of their assistance. This accusation does

not touch me personally, who was absent at the time alluded to, having been detained, by circumstances, in the country, till long after the charges had been fully adopted. I have nothing, therefore, to restrain me, so far as related to any former conduct or language of mine, from declaring in favour of any course of proceeding, that I may now see fit: nor have I been backward, certainly, on other occasions to support unprotected accusers against powerful culprits, as in the case of the late unfriended and hardly-treated Mr. Paull, when accusing a Governor-General of India. But with these dispositions, and exempt as I am from any necessity of declaring my opinion at all, I cannot be easy not to say, that had I been present, my conduct would have been precisely the same as that of my Honourable Friends. What else could I have done than keep aloof from a charge, with the grounds and with the author of which I was equally unacquainted, and which certainly did not exhibit at the outset any thing so attractive, either as to the spirit in which it was conceived, the manner in which it was conducted, the success to which it was likely to lead, or the objects which it might be suspected to have ultimately in view, as that all to whom it was proposed must instantly fall in love with it, and rush impetuously to its support. In fact, the cause, as known to the Honourable Mover at the time, was not such as many men would have chosen to engage in, whether their own credit or the interests of the public had been the principle to guide them. For it must never be forgotten, that the cause is now in a very different state from that in which it was originally contemplated by the Honourable Mover; and that the principal part of the evidence, by which it is now supported, was as little known to him, and could be as little anticipated by him, as it could be by the house. But, the matter does not end here: if much was wanting, that was necessary to invite support; there was much on the other hand that must have the effect of repelling it. It does not tell greatly in favour of a cause, that it begins by a breach of confidence, and that it owes the possession of the main part of its evidence to an act of violence, committed in a house to which admission has been procured upon terms of apparent friendship. This is the statement admitted, or not contradicted, by the party. Mrs. Clarke says, that the papers were taken from the table in her presence, but both without her consent, and against her consent. If this protest of hers, made at the time, was mere pretence; if her resistance was merely feigned; if the whole was a sort of permitted rape; or a little love-struggle, *pignusdereptum lacertis, aut digito male pertinaci*, I shall only observe, that it is not treating the house very respectfully, in a matter pretty important, if upon such grounds, they are to be made to believe, that Mrs. Clarke is an unwilling witness, and en-

titled to all the additional credit on one side, which such a character would give her. But if the facts really are as she stated, and as the Honourable Mover does not seem to deny, if the papers were in truth taken by him from her table, he entering the house as he did, and she protesting *bonâ fide* against the proceeding,—other Gentlemen must think as they like, but I must declare, for my own part, that there was no one article of the charges, proved or unproved, which I would not rather confess to, than be guilty of the act so described. It is, at least, a pretty good reason why I have been shy, as my Honourable Friends are accused of being, of mixing in a cause of which such an act stands in the front.

The Right Honourable Gentleman concluded with observing, that if the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was pressed, and that no other alternative was offered, he must perforce, though by no means satisfactorily to himself, vote for the Address proposed by the Honourable Gentleman on the floor (Mr. Banks).

On the 15th the debate was concluded, and on a division, the numbers were,

For Mr. Banks's Amendment	199
Against it ,	294
Majority	95

A second division took place on Mr. Perceval's Amendment to Mr. Warde's Address,

For the Amendment	364
Against it	123
Majority	241

MR. CURWEN'S REFORM BILL.

MAY 26th, 1809.

MR. CURWEN moved the order of the day for resuming the adjourned debate on a Bill "for the better securing the Independence and Purity of Parliament, by preventing the procuring or obtaining of Seats by corrupt Practices." The Speaker explained that the question was, that he do now leave the Chair. Sir Francis Burdett opposed the Bill, on the ground of its insufficiency to the purpose of such a Reform of Parliament as he considered to be called for by the country, as also, because he conceived the bill would operate as an indemnity to past delinquencies. After some observations from Mr. Fuller and Mr. Wilberforce,

MR. WINDHAM rose, and said:

Sir,

I AM well satisfied to have heard, before I address you, the speeches of the two Honourable Gentlemen who have last sat down, as those speeches will have helped to recall our attention to the question more immediately before us, from which the speech of the Honourable Baronet (Sir F. Burdett) had, in some measure, led us away, though not to any topics, which I mean to describe, or which I wish the house to consider, as unconnected with the subject. Those topics are indeed most closely connected with it, as they are in themselves also of a nature and character, to which I must not fail hereafter to advert, and with which the house will, I hope, be duly impressed.

In the meanwhile, I must fairly profess, that upon the subject of the question immediately submitted to us, I have found no reason, from any thing that I have heard to-night, or upon other occasions, or that my own reflections or inquiries have furnished, to alter the opinions with which I took the liberty of troubling the house on the night on which it was first brought forward. I equally think it a measure ill-timed, injudicious, founded upon false views, false facts, and false assumptions, calculated to produce no good in the first instance, and liable and likely to lead to the most serious mischiefs in future.

The whole measure rests, 1st, upon an assumption, which, in the sense in which it is used, and the extent to which it is carried, I utterly deny, namely, that the transactions in question are corrupt; and, 2dly, upon a position, which is true indeed, but of no effect or operation without the other, namely, that acts criminal

and abusive in themselves, cannot be protected by the length of time that they have been suffered to prevail, or by the number or authority of the persons, who have been found to practise them.

Nobody pretends to say, that fraud, falsehood, theft, robbery, the whole list of crimes by which society is disfigured and injured, though co-evil and co-extensive with society itself, are, for that reason, less crimes, or call less for reprobation and punishment, than they did at their first appearance in the world. There are innumerable offences and depravities, which no authority can support, or sanction, but which will to the end of time pull down the character, and reputation of all those, be they who they may, who shall be found to have been guilty of them. What we are to inquire is, whether the acts now meant to be proceeded against are of that sort? whether they are, like many others, acts which those who commit them know, at the time, to be wrong, though, under the impulse of strong temptation, they may not have the virtue to abstain from them; which degrade the person in his own opinion, and would, if known, degrade him in that of others; which he is compelled to condemn at the very moment he yields to them; which are attended in the immediate instance with injury to others; or, at least, tend to weaken the authority and observance of some rule, which the interests of society require to be upheld? Let us consider how the matter stands in respect to the nature and description of the act. Let us open the pleadings by stating the case.

A minister in the time of Geo. I. or Queen Anne, or King William, has a friend come to him, at the moment of a general election, who says, "I have a great interest in the borough of such a place. I have a large property, and I have laid out a great deal of money there; I have obliged, in various ways, numbers of the voters and their connexions; many are dependent on me, many look up to me for favours that they have received, or favours they expect: in short, I may venture to say, that I can bring in both members. One of the seats I must reserve for my son; but for the other I shall be very happy to take by the hand any one whom you will recommend. I have been always, as you know, warmly attached to you and your friends; and anxious to give every support in my power to a set of men, whom I have always acted with in and out of office, and whom I rejoice to see in their present situations, because I think them in my conscience the fittest men to whom the interests of the country can be entrusted: I want nothing for myself, and should be very glad to offer this seat to your friend free of all expense; but the sums which I have been obliged to lay out in cultivating this interest; the property which I have been obliged to purchase, on terms yielding but a very inadequate return in point of income;

the heavy charges incurred in supporting the rights of the free-men in the two last contests, joined to the probable expense of the present election, will oblige me, towards replacing in part what these will have cost me, to require a sum to such and such an amount, from the friend, whoever he is, whom you shall recommend."—The minister says, "I am exceedingly obliged to you; nothing could come more opportunely: I have, at this moment, a young man, the son of our friend Lord Such-a-One, for whom I am most anxious to procure the means of his getting into Parliament, not only on account of our friend his father, but because he is a young man of most extraordinary promise, with his whole mind turned to public business, and likely to become in time one of the greatest ornaments and supports of the country. His father will, I am sure, have no objection to advance the sum which you require, and which is very moderate; and you will, I am persuaded, be happy in introducing into public life a young man likely to do so much credit to your recommendation."

All this I am taught to understand is grossly corrupt, much in the same way as any act of petulation or embezzlement.—I can only say, in the first instance, that I am sorry for it; because some such things have, I am afraid, been done even in the best times, and by those commonly accounted the best men. I am sorry to be obliged to part with so much of the admiration which I have been accustomed to feel for supposed virtue and character, and to confess that those eminent men, early and recent, whom we have hitherto looked up to as patterns of virtue and the pride and ornament of the country, were little better than corrupt knaves. It is painful, I say, to part with these convictions, and to be compelled to confess the world less virtuous than we had supposed it. It may be forgiven to us, therefore, if we make some struggle in defence of our former opinions, and if I venture to ask, as an humble inquirer, and for the sake of information, what is the precise nature and character of this corruption, and in what part of the transaction, that is to say, with which of the parties, it is supposed principally to reside.

As to the minister, who is the party first seized upon, and against whom the charge is most pressed, his guilt can be only derivative and dependent on that of others. He is only the go-between, the broker, the procuress, if you please, who brings the parties together: but unless the parties meet for some ill purpose, his office is innocent. Of the two remaining parties then, which is the most criminal, the giver or the receiver? the buyer or the seller? or is their guilt equal? Let us know a little more distinctly, what are the rule and principles which we mean to lay down.

it meant to be stated generally, that no place of trust and
lence, no place to which important duties are annexed, shall

be disposed of for a valuable consideration? that the sale of a place of trust is, in all circumstances and in every instance, a corrupt and criminal transaction? If it is, then does both the law and the practice of various countries, and of this country among others, sanction and authorise most corrupt and criminal transactions. I would quote, in the first instance, the whole of the parliaments under the old monarchy of France; which, though not parliaments in our sense of the word, were of a nature to make the disposal of seats in them for money, a proceeding, if it were wrong at all, infinitely more wrong than the same proceeding would be here. For the parliaments in France were judicial tribunals, courts of judicature, in which the whole civil and criminal justice of that renowned and enlightened kingdom, was administered; and where, in spite of those vulgar national prejudices, under which we have sometimes been thought to labour, and which lead us to believe that nothing can be right or good, but what is conformable to our peculiar notions and institutions, justice was, for the most part, I believe, most ably and uprightly administered, and where certainly as great and eminent lawyers and jurists have been produced, and men of as pure and unspotted character, as are to be found in the legal history of any country whatever. Yet were all the seats in these assemblies, regularly, publicly, and avowedly bought and sold. So little do the effects of civil and political institutions, or the laws relating to them, answer, in fact and practice, to what the theories even of the wisest and best informed men, would previously pronounce of them! That these tribunals, whether such or not as I have described them, could not be such as our coarse and narrow prejudices, or our hasty and inconsiderate theories, would lead us to suppose, is demonstrable from the fact. For no country, much less such a one as I am adverting to, would consent for ages together, that the whole source of its justice should be polluted and corrupt.

But to avoid all reference to instances liable to dispute, let us only ask whether we have not, among ourselves, appointments, which, if not absolutely judicial, are very closely connected either with judicial functions, or with others not less repugnant to the admission of any thing corrupt or impure; of which the sale is not only practised, but publicly tolerated and authorised. In what department, too, of the state, are these offices found? In the law, and in the church.* Is it not notorious, that part of the salary

* To these should have been added the army. It will be curious to hear a general and unqualified condemnation of the sale of places of trust and confidence, in a country which publicly authorises the sale of all its military commissions, and in which the practice is defended: objectionable as it is, in

or emoluments of our judges, the well-earned, necessary, inadequate emoluments of our judges, arises from the sale of places, having duties belonging to them connected with the business of their courts? Yet does any man, on this account, impeach the integrity or purity of our judges; which are on the contrary (and deservedly) the constant subject of our boast? or find ground for insinuating that the functions of these offices are not as well performed, and the persons filling them, as respectable and proper persons, as they could be, if they were appointed in any other manner? The church furnishes examples likewise, which, if not directly in point, equally contradict the position above supposed, if laid down to its full extent; and in such a manner as not to shelter itself under the distinction, not a very creditable one, between an actual and a virtual sale. For what does any man do, who purchases or who sells the advowson of a living? or who purchases or sells the next presentation? does not he, both in effect and intentionally, purchase or sell the nomination to an office of the highest trust and confidence? and if this be morally wrong, can it cease to be so, because the act of appointment is not to take place immediately, but is, in some degree, contingent and remote? Can that which is corrupt and criminal, if carried into effect immediately, become perfectly innocent, because the execution of it is made to depend upon an event, which, though certain, may not happen for several months? It is impossible, therefore, to maintain, that the sale of seats in parliament is corrupt, simply upon the principle, that it is corrupt to take a valuable consideration for a nomination to a place of trust and confidence. The known, recognised, authorised, avowed practice of our own

various respects, and unknown to the ordinances of any other service; upon the ground of its being the best method for keeping down the military influence of the crown.

Nothing can mark more strongly, in what a loose, careless, and summary way, upon what imperfect consideration and hasty views, opinions are often formed and acted upon, even in matters of the highest concern. The authors of the bill, notwithstanding the care and thought they must be presumed to have bestowed upon a measure replete with so many important consequences, appear totally to have overlooked this (rather prominent) instance, of the army. It ought, at least, to have been noticed. It is not sufficient to answer that the two cases are not precisely, and at all points, the same. What two cases are precisely the same? The army is, at least, a case in point, in an argument which proceeds throughout on an assumption, that the sale of a place of trust and confidence is *in genere* a corrupt act. At any rate, the difference between the two cases is not the difference between all and none; between the most furious and unrestricted reprobation, and the absence of even a suspicion, that there was any thing amiss.

country, in departments the most exempt from any suspicion of impurity, and where the admission of any thing incorrect would be most anxiously guarded against, is in direct contradiction to such a position.

We have still, therefore, to look for the ground on which either the buyer or the seller, in such a transaction as that above stated, is to be represented as being a man morally corrupt. In fact, if their proceeding is corrupt, it will be difficult, or as I should say, utterly impossible, to stop there, and not to go on, and declare corrupt the very influence itself, by which they are enabled to carry into effect this corrupt bargain. If the buying and selling be corrupt, it can only be so for reasons, which will make it corrupt to have the commodity which is capable of being so bought and sold. This is the true seat of the grievance, as, it must be confessed to be, the true place in which to apply the remedy. So long as there are persons in a situation to say, I can make an offer of a seat in parliament, so long will there be persons to treat with them for that object, and so long will means be found; for commuting in some way or other the influence so possessed, for considerations valuable to the possessor. The only effectual way will be to get rid of the influence altogether;—to make it penal for any one to have such goods in his possession. This, the Honourable Mover may be assured, is the use that will be made of his measure (nay, it is the just and legitimate use) by those, who do not scruple now to oppose it, because they like to argue the question both ways, to be ready for either event; and may think, possibly, that more is to be gained by procuring the rejection of it, and by the ground thereby laid for raising a clamour against parliament, than they can hope for from the argument and the authority which it will furnish, towards subverting the greater part of the influence, which property is now allowed to retain.

I know how prompt the answer to this will be, and how triumphantly I shall be told, that no two things can be more remote from each other, than the influence of property, the just, wholesome, legitimate influence of property, and the sale of seats.—But let us recollect that, in the present business, we are arguing throughout upon *principle*, and that it is of the nature of *principle*, to unite things the most various and opposite in their individual forms and circumstances. It is not a question how far things may be distinguished: but how far those, which are naturally distinguished, may be assimilated and made one. Those who can make no distinctions between an offence against the bribery laws, by giving money to a particular voter, and the sale of a seat, can hardly be expected to distinguish between the sale of a seat, and such a use of influence as will give them the seat to sell.

I am as well aware as another, that there is much influence

which, though ultimately to be traced to property, is so remote from its primary source, has been so changed in the gradations which it has passed through, has been so improved by successive graftings, as to retain little or nothing of its original character,—of the harshness and acerbity of the parent stock. The case is the same as with that passion in our nature, which, though too gross to be named, is often the source of every thing delicate and sentimental; which, as the poet describes,

—through some certain strainers well refined,
Is gentle love, and charms all woman-kind.

All, in these instances, that property may have done, is to have given to virtue the means of acting, and the opportunity of displaying itself; to have furnished the instrument without which its energies must have been useless, and to have erected the stage without which it would have remained unknown. I am under no apprehensions for the fate of influence of this sort. My Honourable Friend and others, notwithstanding the operation of this bill, will be at full liberty, I trust, to lay out their thousands in acts of beneficence and bounty, in building bridges, or endowing hospitals, in relieving the wants or advancing the fortunes of the indigent and meritorious. They may still enjoy, together with all the heartfelt satisfaction, all the influence which will naturally arise from property so employed;

Him portion'd maids, apprenticed orphans blest,
The young who labour, and the old who rest.

But is this the only way in which property exerts its powers? Is it always taken in this finer form of the extract or essence? Is it never exhibited in the substance? It is here that the comparison will begin, and that the question will be asked; which the advocates of this bill, who do not mean it to extend to the abolition of the influence of property, will do well to be prepared to answer; How, if the sale of a seat or any commutation of services connected with such an object be gross corruption, can we tolerate the influence which property gives, in biasing the minds of those who are to give their votes? How a landlord, for instance, should have any more influence over his own tenants, than over those of another man? How a large manufacturer should be able to bring to the poll more of his own workmen, than of those employed in the service of his neighbour? How an opulent man of any description spending his fortune in a borough town, should be able to talk of his influence among the smaller tradesmen: or be at liberty to hint to his baker or his butcher, that, laying out every week such a sum with them, as he does, he expects that they should oblige him by giving a vote to his friend, Mr. Such-a-One, at the next election? If all this is not corrupt, upon the principles

on which we are now arguing, I know not what is. What has money spent with tradesmen, or work given to manufacturers, or farms let to tenants, to do with the independent exercise of their right, and the conscientious discharge of their duty, in the election of a member to serve them in parliament? A fine idea truly, that their decision in the choice of a representative is to be influenced by the consideration of what is best for their separate and private interest! or that persons, the advocates of purity, and who will hear of nothing but strict principle, should attempt to distinguish between the influence which engages a man's vote by the offer of a sum of money, and that which forbids the refusal of it, under the penalty of loss of custom or loss of work, or of the possession of that on which his wife and family must depend for their bread? I shall be curious to hear in what manner, not the advocates of this bill, but the advocates for the principles on which this bill is enforced, will defend themselves against these questions; and be able to show, that while it is gross corruption, gross moral depravity, in any one who possesses such influence, to connect his own interest with the use of it, even though he should not use it improperly, it is perfectly innocent to create that influence by the means just described? Or on the other hand, if such means are not lawful, how the influence of property is to continue, such as it has at all times subsisted in practice, and been at all times considered as lawfully subsisting? It is indifferent to me which side of the alternative they take; but let them be well aware that such is the alternative to which they will be reduced; and that if they contend generally, as is now done, that such and such things are corrupt, because they admit the consideration of interest in matters which ought to be exclusively decided on principles of duty, it is in vain for them hereafter to contend that any man has a right to influence his tenants, or tradesmen, or workmen, by any other means at least than those by which he may equally influence the tenants, tradesmen, or workmen of any other person; that is to say, by his talents or by his virtues, by the services which he may *have* done, and the gratitude he may *have* inspired.

When I look, therefore, to the moral qualities of these acts, as independent of and antecedent to positive law, I am at a loss to find what it is, either on the score of principle or of authority, that determines them to be corrupt, or that enables us, if they are corrupt, to exempt from the same sentence of corruption nine-tenths of the influence, which has hitherto been supposed to be attached, and legitimately attached, to property, and which, for aught that at present appears, there is no intention of taking away.

But though such may be the result of an inquiry into the moral constitution of these acts, there can be no doubt, that the law

may render corrupt any act which it pleases, that is to say, the law may make any act which it pleases illegal; and to do, or procure to be done, an illegal act, from an interested motive, is, I apprehend, corruption.

We are to inquire therefore, in what manner and to what degree, those acts, which generally speaking are not corrupt, have been rendered so by positive law. And first, without affirming or denying the fact, let us examine the conclusiveness and validity of the arguments, by which it has hitherto been attempted to be proved. It has been said by those from whom I should have expected better reasoning, that the corruption follows of necessity from the laws respecting bribery in the case of individual voters; for that it is impossible that the law should be guilty of such monstrous inconsistency, as well as of such flagrant injustice, as to punish the poor for bribery in retail, while they suffer it to be practised with impunity by the rich in wholesale.

There is something so widely inconclusive in this argument, as to make it difficult to set about formally to confute it. I cannot better illustrate its fallacy than by an argument something of the same sort, quite as good in respect to conclusiveness, and much better in respect to point and archness, which I remember to have heard, as a boy, at a contested election for the county of Norfolk; where one of the candidates, a most respectable man, had rendered himself obnoxious by the inclosure of a common (a proceeding less familiar at that time, and better calculated therefore for a subject of popular clamour); upon which the wit of the day was to ask, in way of dialogue, what that man deserved who should steal a goose from a common? and when the answer was given, to follow up the question by another, what then shall be done to him who steals the common from the goose? This was very good election wit, but certainly very bad argument, (though just as good as that to which I have been adverting;) for what is the affinity between the two offences, so as to justify the considering the one, as differing from the other, only by being upon a larger scale? A man by procuring the enclosure of a common, where such enclosure ought not to take place, may do a much worse moral act, with less temptation probably, and with far more injury to others' interests, than by the theft of many geese: yet who would ever dream of describing these as kindred acts, or propose that the encloser of commons, if convicted of having enclosed when he ought not, should be punished by imprisonment and whipping? Other instances may be cited more directly in point. There are, or have been, I believe, laws to restrain the retail sale of spirits. Should we think that a man argued very wisely or conclusively, with much fairness of representation, or much knowledge of the principles of legislation, who should ha-

range at the door of an alehouse (the only place however fit for such a discourse) against the justice of laws, who could punish a publican for selling a dram to a poor wretch, who wanted it perhaps to solace him under the effects of cold and hunger, to whom it must stand in the place of food and raiment; while the same law did not scruple to permit the sale of these spirits by wholesale on the part of the rich merchant or still more opulent planter? and should take occasion thence to ask (exactly in the style of my Honourable Friend) if such was the punishment for selling a dram or gill, what did they deserve who sold these spirits by puncheons and ship-loads? The answer is, that these acts do not stand to each other in the relation of more or less, but are perfectly disparate or dissimilar; are productive of different consequences; are to be regulated by different provisions; are so widely separated in character, as that the one may be an object of national encouragement, a source of public wealth and benefit, while the other can produce nothing but mischief, and is a practice requiring to be restrained by penal statute. Nothing therefore can be more false than the inference by which it is concluded that the sale of a seat, in cases where it can be effected, must be deemed corrupt, because there are laws which prohibit the gift of money to individual voters. Both may be corrupt, and both may require to be prohibited: but not the one on account of the other.

Supposing however the fact to be, that by fair construction of the law of parliament, such bargains as are here in question, must be considered as illegal, and may in consequence be denominated corrupt: it is so far from following that the present bill is therefore necessary, that the presumption would rather lie the other way, and the conclusion be that a new bill was not wanted; inasmuch as it could only prohibit that which was already prohibited. In general, the precedent of any law tells as much for what it does not, as for what it does. If we have the authority of our ancestors for doing so much, we have their authority also for doing no more. If they tell us, that such things ought to be prevented, they tell us likewise, so far as their practice is our guide, that the attempts at prevention ought not to be pushed beyond a certain extent. It is undoubtedly true, that laws, right in their object, may be deficient in their means, or that change of times and circumstances may require new penalties and provisions to effect that to which the old were formerly adequate. But then this change and this necessity should be shown; and after all it is no just conclusion, that because our ancestors wished to prevent certain things by certain means, they would therefore be willing to accomplish their object at any price, or have recourse to any means, be they what they would, which the attainment of that object might require at a subsequent period.

Our business therefore is to ascertain, what it is right for us to do, with respect to an object, on which neither morals, nor law as antecedently established, prescribe to us any certain mode of action, nor even impose upon us the necessity of acting at all.—The acts in question are not in themselves corrupt or immoral. The law has either prescribed nothing about them, or, having prescribed what it has thought fit, has left, to say the least, the necessity of any further provisions, to the judgment of the legislature of the time.—It may be, that what it is proposed to suppress is a political evil, tending to render parliament a less fit instrument for promoting the general welfare. If it is so, let us, in God's name, set about in earnest to devise the means of suppressing it: taking care always as in other instances, that in eradicating what is bad, we do not injure what is good, that in removing one evil we do not introduce others of far greater amount. But with this view, let us be sure, that attempting change, with all the dangers to which change is liable; particularly in a machine so delicate, so complicated, the movements of which can be so little defined, and are so imperfectly understood, as those of the British constitution; we are not proceeding upon assumptions, which we ourselves at the moment suspect to be false, and which we adopt rather in compliance with the clamour of persons out of doors, than in conformity to our own sober, deliberate, and unbiassed judgment.

It is in fact in deference to the former of these motives, that is to say, to the voice of what is called The Public, that the adoption of the measure now proposed is principally urged. And this being the case, it is in a more especial manner incumbent upon us, to consider what is the nature of this call, by what causes it has been excited, with what circumstances it is combined, and from what classes and descriptions of persons it chiefly proceeds. It would be the height of weakness and folly in any case to adopt a great political measure without considering something more than the mere measure itself, without looking to the right and to the left, and inquiring what consequences it was likely or liable to produce beyond those immediately in view.

We have been told that this measure has nothing to do with the great question of Parliamentary Reform. If this be so, we have all been under a strange misconception, for, with one exception only, not a gentleman has spoken upon the measure, on either side, or in any stage of its progress, who has treated the subject upon any other footing. It would in fact be perfect childishness to consider this measure, otherwise than as arising out of the temper and fashion of the times, and as part of that wild rage, which has suddenly seized us; nobody knows why or wherefore; for pulling to pieces the government and the constitution. It is one

of the introductory steps, which, it is hoped, may lead us in time to conclusions of greater importance: one of the early symptoms, the little eruptive pustule which shows, that we have received the infection, that the disease has got hold of us. The disease itself is however denied; and we are required to believe, that the whole of the present cry originates in nothing, but in the abuses recently discovered in the business of the Duke of York.

Let this opinion be examined. The amount of what the Inquiry into the Conduct of the Duke of York has discovered, is, that the mistress of a man in power had received money for the use of the influence, which she had, or pretended to have, in procuring places and appointments. This, if it stood alone, would be an odd ground for bringing a general charge of corruption against the government, or even for arraigning the person himself: for who is there in office that is not surrounded by connexions, official and others, by whom such a pretence of influence might at any time be set up, and by whom, in many cases, it might be maintained, with a degree of plausibility far more than sufficient for imposing upon persons who by their eagerness and their ignorance have shown themselves, as we have seen, so well prepared to be imposed upon? As for participation or connivance, though there are persons who accuse the Duke of both of these, their numbers are few, (speaking always of those whose qualifications for judging are such as to make their judgment of any value,) and even of those few, fewer still think that their suspicions, whether true or false, admit of any sufficient proof. The whole of the proof, with the exception of a single doubtful passage from Miss Taylor, rested on the authority of such a witness as Mrs. Clarke, speaking, too, to facts which passed only between her and the party accused.*

* Since the above remarks were made, some curious circumstances have occurred, materially affecting the complexion of the cause as it appeared originally before the House of Commons.

Colonel Wardle has found out that his principal witness, the witness on whose testimony the charge, as applicable to the Duke of York, almost exclusively rested, was a person not fit to be believed upon her oath.

It is thought perfectly right and fitting, that Mrs. Clarke's unsworn and unsupported testimony, on a question of private conversation, in which she and the party accused were the only persons present, was to be good against the Duke of York; while her sworn, supported, and, till the last trial, uncontradicted testimony, in matters not passing in secret, and in support of facts having nothing in them incredible or even difficult of belief, was not to be good against Colonel Wardle.

This is popular justice!

Considering what was the point really at issue in the late trial, it is diffi-

Yet with all this, such is the surprise excited in this country by a suspicion even, of corruption in persons of high rank and station, and such the commotion which any suspicion to that effect never fails to create, that the Duke of York, a member of the royal family, the King's own son, in full possession of his father's favour, and of the respect and good will of the greater part of the nation, is fain to quit the situation of Commander in Chief, which he has held with credit for fourteen years and more, and to withdraw into retirement, sooner than run the risk of the steps, which parliament, it was feared, would otherwise be induced to take.

Can any man believe that it was an instance like this which has inspired the country with a distrust of its Government, and excited a desire of new-modelling its parliament, as being too submissive to the wishes of the court? We must look to other motives and purposes; to which the present bill is meant to serve as an instrument, and for which the business of the Duke of York

cult to say, which of the two decisions, the one *for*, as it is called, or the one *against*, was that which Colonel Wardle ought most to have deprecated. If the credit of his witness was established, he stood convicted of having made pecuniary engagements, for the purpose too, as it must appear, of suborning evidence, and of refusing afterwards to make them good. If, on the other hand, his witness was disbelieved; in which case she could be considered only as a woman deliberately perjured; what atonement or apology could he make to the several parties and interests, which had suffered or been endangered by his proceeding, (to the Duke of York, the immediate object of the attack; to the King, whose best feelings had been tortured; to the House of Commons, whose confidence had been abused, whose time had been mispent, and whose character had been committed, to the general cause of injured justice;) for having brought forward a cause, which, in the sole material point, namely, the application of the charge to the person accused, was to rest principally, if not exclusively, on the testimony of such a witness! And it must not be supposed, that the dilemma, to which Colonel Wardle is thus reduced, is one that can be retorted upon those who urge it, or be made to tell in favour of him as well as against him. Though the conclusion be inevitable, that if Mrs. Clarke was forsworn on the trial, she was not a credible witness in the Examination before the House of Commons, it does not follow *à contrd*, that the belief of her testimony in Court, where she was examined upon oath, and was speaking to matters that passed in the presence of others, implies the necessity of believing her, when she was not upon oath, and was delivering a testimony, which, whether true or false, left her equally free from the possibility of detection.—(This note was subjoined to the text by Mr. Windham, when the speech was separately printed in the form of a pamphlet.—Ed.)

is made to serve as a pretext, being after all, it must be confessed, a very flimsy and sorry one.

Upon what principle is it that we are told, that it is to libel the people of England, to say that there are among them thousands and thousands, who wish the destruction of the present order of things, and who are labouring night and day to carry into effect that laudable purpose? And with what decency, it may be added, is this libel complained of by those, who are every day libelling this house, and all the higher orders of the state, in the grossest and most unmeasured terms? Why is it more a libel than to say, that there are among the people of England, robbers, murderers, and housebreakers, and offenders of all descriptions, and who, numerous as they are, would soon show themselves in tenfold greater numbers, if the fear of the law did not keep them down? Are there not as powerful motives, passions as fierce and strong, and interests as tempting and urgent, to arm men for the overthrow of all Government, as there are to incite them to depredations on private property, or any other act of violence? There is no Government, bad or good, that can boast of owing its stability (or quiet, at least,) to any other cause than to the difficulty and danger which is opposed to every attempt to subvert it. Let but the project be easy, let but hopes be entertained of its success, and thousands will be found, who, from motives of different sorts,—some from folly, and some from wickedness; some because they know not what they are about, some because they do know; some as knaves, and more as dupes; many from motives of interest, and more from motives of passion; some because they hate one part of the establishment, and others because they hate another; some as mere fanatics, and because they have entangled their understandings (commonly of the most inferior cast) in speculations to which they are wholly unequal; others from mere restlessness and love of something to do; but far the greater part, from some species of bad passion or other, (not excluding, of course, those most powerful and general ones, vanity and love of distinction,) are desirous of seeing some great change in the order of things as they find it established: not all of them, by any means, desiring a change of the same sort, or to the same extent: Oh, no! but all of them a change suited to their several views, and proportioned to their several interests and situations.

My Honourable Friend, the author of the measure, and a great landed proprietor, thinks that there would be signal advantage in a change which would throw more weight into the scale of the landed interest. Another Honourable Friend of mine, likewise a great landed proprietor, is of opinion, that those who can only purchase their seats, are intent upon nothing but getting back their money. To these are opposed many Gentlemen of the moneyed

interest, who see no reason (nor do I, I confess, see any), why they who may have paid a sum for their seats once for all, should be more desirous of getting back their money, than he who has spent that sum, or three times as much, in a contested popular election. I am far, too, from being convinced, from any observations that I have made of the conduct of men in parliament, that such, in point of fact, is the case. To my apprehension, many of those who may be suspected to have come into parliament through these condemned and reprobated ways, have been among the most upright, honourable, and independent members, that parliament has had to boast, far exceeding others that could be named, who, from the money they have spent, and the interests they have staked, in elections pretending to be of higher account, have only brought themselves to be the mere slaves of popular opinion, that is to say, of their own future hopes in the places which they represent. Many of the former description, from the class to which, for the most part, they belong, will be of opinion, probably, that the best improvement would be that which conspires best with the general change in the circumstances of the country, and by taking something from the old and obsolete privileges of the landed aristocracy, the barbarous remains of feudal times, give a free scope to men who owe their wealth, not to dull hereditary descent, but to their own enterprise and industry, and have grown rich by means that have, at the same time, enriched, or otherwise benefited, the country.

But there is a third and more numerous class (and by no means an inactive or inefficient one), who, looking with no very friendly eye to advantages which they do not share, and knowing to a certainty that they have neither land nor money, yet fully persuaded that they have talents, will be for levelling to the ground all those barriers, which have hitherto, as they are firmly convinced, been the sole obstacles to their advancement, and have alone hindered them from figuring in the first situations of the state.

The general rule will, I believe, be, that each man's opinions will be found to lean to that state of things, which he conceives to be the most favourable to his own consequence. Political consequence is probably a far more powerful, as it is a far more extensive motive, than prospects of private advantage. The numbers may be few, who can hope to better themselves by any change in a pecuniary view: and these will of course be found, for the most part, among persons of no great authority from their present wealth or station. But many will have in their minds (and the highest in rank and fortune not less than others), some scheme of things, in which they may hope to become more considerable in point of general consequence. And if such men

should be, as they are the most likely to be, men of ardent and daring minds, jealous of their importance, eager for distinction, impatient of control, less awed by the fear of loss, than sanguine in their hopes of gain, materials will not be wanting for furnishing out a revolution even from among the higher orders; in opposition to that childish notion, so false even in theory, and so contrary to all experience, that men will not engage in such enterprises who have much to lose; or, as it is often expressed, have a great stake in the country.

Heretofore, in fact, disturbances in the state were confined entirely to the class that had much to lose, namely, to persons in the highest rank of society; and though, since the example of the French Revolution, this limitation is done away, and the lottery of revolution thrown open even to adventurers of the lowest denomination, yet the rich are not excluded, and we see every day that they are not at all disposed to exclude themselves. For though the French Revolution exhibits the most striking example of failure, that the lovers of right could ever have wished to the authors of wrong; yet this failure relates only to the professed objects, the peace and happiness and liberty of mankind. In other respects, and with relation to the views and interests of individual reformers, who, in truth and fact, trouble themselves but little with the peace and happiness and liberty of mankind, the example is most encouraging; and particularly with respect to those, who are not likely to be deterred by personal risk; for nothing can show so strikingly the facility with which the object can be accomplished, and with which men from the lowest stations may be lifted suddenly to the highest. This is all that is wanted; for give but the chance of success, even a very indifferent chance, and thousands will not be wanting, high and low, to engage in the undertaking, and to labour with all the restless activity and increasing industry with which we see the work carrying on at this instant.

Still the means must be supplied. They cannot make bricks without straw. Even these reformers or revolutionists, numerous as they are, and strenuous as their exertions are, cannot make a revolution of themselves, nor by their utmost efforts throw the country off that happy basis, on which it has rested for so many centuries, an object of admiration and envy, and never more so than at the present moment. The great mass of the community is, no doubt, against them: but industry and perseverance may do much. Those who would never listen to such a proposal in its full extent, may yet be drawn in by degrees.

Formerly, that is to say, some five-and-twenty years ago, the attempt was made through the medium of mere abstract reasoning. Incredible as it may seem, the idea was entertained, as I

should say, of overturning the government, but, as even the authors of the attempt must say, of totally changing the constitution of parliament, not by pointing out any practical grievance under which men laboured, but by convincing them that the whole of the British constitution, such as it had existed for ages, was an infraction upon the rights of man. The notion was new of attempting to make a great change in the practical concerns of mankind by the mere force of metaphysical reasoning. But wild and extravagant as such an attempt may be, and little, happily, as was its final success at the period alluded to, we must not speak too slightly of it, when we recollect what share such notions had in bringing about the French Revolution, of which they ostensibly made the basis. At the end of twelve or fourteen centuries, the French monarchy, at the moment of its greatest mildness, and when all that was harsh and odious in it was daily wearing away, was overthrown, with all the circumstances which we have witnessed, ostensibly by the mere force of metaphysical reasoning; and what is more humiliating, if not more surprising, by metaphysical reasoning of the most contemptible sort!

This mode, however, has now lost much of its efficacy, and has got to be rather out of fashion. In seeking to embody the natural and unavoidable discontents of mankind for the purpose of overturning governments, which is the general description of what I should understand by Jacobinism, it has become necessary to have recourse to something more solid and substantial than mere grievances of theory, and to take the discontents arising from real causes, whether the discontents themselves be reasonable or not, and then to connect these as effect and cause, with something wrong, or said to be wrong, either in the frame or practice of the government. The discontents you are sure of; they can never be wanting, as long as men are men, and that society is composed of various ranks and conditions, whereof some are higher and better than others. Since the days of *qui fit Mecenas*, down to the present moment, few have ever been found, who were so contented with their lot, whether chosen by themselves, or cast upon them by Providence, *ut illâ contenti vivant*; and if they cannot be said, *laudare diversa sequentes*, they at least think that their own situation is not so good as it ought to be, or as a little change would make it. In a country like this, where a great portion of our immense riches is paid in contributions to the public service, no man will ever think himself as rich as he ought to be: for though the wealth of the country has increased in full proportion, I believe, to its burthens, that is to say, to its expenses; and though there never was a time when that wealth was more evenly diffused through all ranks and classes of people, yet as luxury has increased at the same time,

not to say with equal rapidity, every man may, in some sense, describe himself as poor, inasmuch as the interval between his income and his expenditure will, as a proportionate part, be less than it was before. Let his wealth be what it will, if his expenses increase in such a way as to continue to press equally upon the bounds of his income, he will never be a bit richer, with respect to any disposable surplus, but will be equally under the necessity of parting with some article of pride or enjoyment which he wishes to keep, whenever he is called upon for any contribution to the service of the state. It is, therefore, the singular and melancholy characteristic of the state of poverty here described, that it is one which riches cannot cure. In common cases, if a man be poor, give him money enough, and he is poor no longer. But here we may almost say, that the richer the nation is, the poorer it is. It is in vain that wealth is pouring in upon us from every quarter, and through an endless variety of channels; that it is not confined, as national wealth in truth never can be, to particular persons or classes, but is diffused throughout with wonderful exactness; or rather in larger measure, in fact, to the lower and middling orders; that foreigners, resorting hither, cannot behold without astonishment a display of wealth and enjoyment, unknown at any former time, or in any other country; that we are reproached every day from the continent with our opulence and prosperity as contrasted with the penury and misery of other countries; and are regarded with greedy eyes by the master of all the rest of Europe, as a mine of wealth, which he is longing only to get possession of; all this while, we, who know these things better, are full of complaints and lamentations, and representing ourselves as an oppressed, burthened, and, above all, impoverished nation.

In the midst of this, there is nevertheless one remedy, which, if men could be persuaded to take it, would do away, as by a charm, all this dreadful state of poverty, and restore them in an instant to a condition of ease and affluence.—It seems like quackery to suppose the existence of such a *nostrum*, but it is explained in two words—Let every man resolve to live with no greater measure of enjoyments than his father did before him, than people of the same rank and class did forty years ago. I do not ask that they should lay out only the same money: the same money would not now procure the same enjoyments: but that they should only require the same enjoyments. Let those who formerly walked on foot, be content to walk on foot now, and forego the use of a horse, when the price too of a horse and the expense of keeping one are so much greater. Let those whose means extended no further than to the keeping a horse, be willing to go back to that indulgence, and dispose of their gigs and whiskeys and tan-

dems, now, too, that every article of that sort has risen to such an enormous amount. Let the former riders in gigs and whiskeys and one-horsed carriages, continue to ride in them, and not aspire to be rolling about in post-chaises or barouches, or often both in the one and the other. By this simple expedient, pursued *mutatis, mutandis*, through every class of the community, one may venture to say, (speaking always of persons whose misfortunes or imprudence have not reduced them already to actual indigence,) that nine-tenths of those who are filling the country with their clamours and wailings about the distresses of the times, all but the holders of fixed incomes of an early date, or persons in the lowest class of labourers, will find themselves instantly in a state of ease and comfort fully able to satisfy all the demands of the state, and to lay by something as a future provision for their families.

But as the expedient, we are sure, whatever its merits may be, will never be adopted, there will forever remain, in the feeling excited by the payment of taxes, an inexhaustible fund of discontent, of force sufficient to produce any effect desired, provided means can be found to give it a proper direction. This is the great work on which the artificers of revolution are at present employed. They say to the people, you are all sensible of the burthens under which you labour: you all dislike the payment of taxes. Now what is it that carries the taxes to this immense amount?—A common man would say, the immense amount of the civil and military establishments of a great empire extending over half the world; the number of civil officers necessary to carry on its business in time of peace, and the armies and navies, with all their attendant train of expenses, to provide for its security in case of war. But, no, say the band of patriots here alluded to, the objects here stated are, to be sure, such as cannot be provided for but at a considerable expense. Wars cannot be carried on, armies and navies cannot be maintained, without money. But these expenses alone might be well borne: what sinks the country is the wasteful expenditure of the public money in jobs and corruption, in sinecure places and pensions. It is the abuses that undo us; the abuses that we must correct: and as it is parliament that sanctions, if it is not itself the great seat of, the abuses, it is parliament that we must correct and reform.

The argument is perfectly regular, and the conclusion inevitable, if you admit the several antecedent positions on which it is made to rest. The statement contains in it too all that is necessary to give it effect. A willing audience will never be wanting to statements which hold out a hope of exempting men from the necessity of paying. Once persuade them that all their payments and burdens are the consequence of abuse or mismanagement in

some part of the government, and you produce a state of feeling adequate to almost any purpose for which it can be wanted. Taxes and abuses, joined, generate a kind of expansive force, that will burst asunder even the best compacted governments. The abuses, too, serve to give a direction to the discontent and angry feeling, produced in the first instance by the taxes. They stand in the place of the abstract rights of a few years ago, and are the last improvement made in the machine for overturning states, from which it is conceived to derive a much greater heft and purchase, than in its old form of 'taxes and the rights of man.'

A number of persons are accordingly in a constant state of active search, prying among the establishments, and winding about like a wood-pecker round a tree, in the hopes of finding some unsound part into which they may strike their beaks and begin to work: but not like the honest wood-pecker, who is only in search of the grubs and worms on which he may make a meal, and is at least indifferent as to the fate of the tree. They on the contrary only take the grubs and worms for their pretext, and have for their ultimate object, to open a hole, into which the wet and the rot may enter, and by which the tree, the British oak, (a beautiful shaft of I know not how many load, and the growth of ages,) may decay and perish. Did their labour really terminate in their professed purpose, did they really mean only to pick off the vermin that prey upon the state, they might be as useful as rooks and jackdaws to a flock of sheep; or might share the higher honours, which are paid, in countries infested by locusts, to the bird that rids them of that destructive insect. But to merit these honours, their endeavours must be directed to far different objects, be carried on in a different manner, and be dictated by very different motives.

Let us consider what it is that is comprehended under this general head of abuses, which forms the great instrument whereby the discontents of a country are made subservient to the destruction of its government; which collects and compounds the separate elements of dissatisfaction, to be found floating in society, so as to prepare them for those grand explosions by which states are overthrown.

By abuses is meant, I suppose, either the abuse of patronage; the granting to favour or interest, what ought to be granted only to merits and services; or, secondly, the purloining, embezzling, or corruptly applying the public money. Let us endeavour to ascertain how much of either of these species of abuse exists: how much of them is to be charged to government: and how much, in any event, is likely to be corrected by what is called a Reform of Parliament.

As to the last of these heads of abuse, the purloining or em-

bezzling of the public money; by which must be understood the transferring, by false accounts or otherwise, into the pocket of the individual, what was intended for the public service; I suppose it is hardly necessary to say, that the idea of such an offence as existing among those who constitute what can, with any propriety, be called the Government, could be generated only in the gross imaginations of persons totally ignorant of the principles and motives by which men in such situations must of necessity be actuated. It is not a question of their virtue or probity; but of their feelings, habits, manners, and prudence. They may be, as they often are, mercenary, selfish, rapacious, unprincipled. But it is not in acts like those alluded to, that these dispositions will show themselves, even in the persons who feel them most. It might as well be supposed, that they could seek to enrich themselves by conveying away a diamond snuff-box, or pilfering guineas out of a drawer. Nothing can prove more clearly the degree to which this is true, than the commotion excited, and the effects produced by any appearance of irregularity, even of a minor sort, among persons in higher stations, in transactions connected with the administration of money.

With respect to the abuse of patronage, one of those by which the interests of countries will, in reality, most suffer, I perfectly agree, that it is likewise one, of which the Government, properly so called, that is to say, persons in the highest offices, are as likely to be guilty, and, from their opportunities, more likely to be guilty, than any others. Nothing can exceed the greediness, the selfishness, the insatiable voracity, the profligate disregard of all claims from merit or services, that we often see in persons in high official stations, when providing for themselves, their relations or dependants. I am as little disposed as any one, to defend them in this conduct. Let it be reprobated in terms as harsh as any one pleases, and much more so than it commonly is. But the evil from persons of this description is necessarily limited, not possibly by their own moderation, but by the extent to which their desires are capable of being carried. They can eat no more than their stomachs can contain. The list is small of those immediately connected with them, nor is the number unlimited of those whom they may wish to serve from motives of vanity or interest. When the leech is full, it will drop off of itself.

But what shall set bounds to those streams of abuse that take their rise among the people themselves? Let us trace the genealogy, the birth, parentage, and education, of nine-tenths of the jobs that are done in the army and navy, or in the other departments of the state, and see from what they originate, and in what manner they are brought forward. A gentleman, at the eve of a general election, or on some vacancy in a borough or county, is addressed

by some one who is, or, who, he hopes, will be his constituent, some full-grown manufacturer, or opulent brewer, or eminent attorney, who says, "You know my son Tom, who is in the navy. He has been for some time a lieutenant: I should be very glad if you would get him made master and commander." The candidate or member bows assent, (Mr. Such-a-One is not a man to be disobligened,) he speaks to his friend the minister; the minister speaks to the First Lord of the Admiralty, and, without further inquiry, the thing is done; nobody being able to divine, of those who are not in the secret, and only know our son Tom professionally, for which of his good qualities or meritorious actions he has been made, so much out of his turn, and over the heads of so many old and deserving officers, a master and commander. Here then is a complete job, passing through several successive stages, and disgraceful enough in its progress to all the parties concerned in it, including the member, the minister, and the First Lord of the Admiralty, but certainly not excluding the constituent, the corrupt constituent, who is no member of the Government, high or low, but one of the people, and the prime author and mover of the whole. When this constituent shall hereafter reproach his member, as one of a body that is all corrupt, composed of persons who think of nothing but their own interests, without any regard to the interest of the country, the member may possibly be able to reply, "The most corrupt act I ever was guilty of, was that scandalous job by which I bought your vote and interest, when, contrary to all right and justice, I procured your son to be made a master and commander."

We have here the history of a job, which, though springing from a root that lies wholly among the people, is supposed not to confine itself to the place of its original growth, but to extend its shoots into the parliament, and into the executive government. With a view, however, of showing the temper of some of these declaimers against abuses, let us take another case, (not more difficult, I hope, to be met with,) where, after inquiry made, either the member, or the minister, or the First Lord of the Admiralty, has virtue enough to say, that the pretensions and merits of the person in question are so small, and the injustice of promoting him would be so great, that in spite of all the wish that one of them necessarily has to promote his own success, and the others may have to promote the success of an important parliamentary friend and adherent, and much as it may even be their duty to promote by all honest means the success of one, whose conduct in parliament is likely to be what they think right, they feel it impossible to comply with the application that has been made. Is it quite certain, is it quite a matter of course, that the author of the application, this inveigher against the corruptions of the times, is

satisfied with this answer, however fully explained to him; that he does not turn away with a sulky look from his late friend, and without disputing at all the truth of the reasons on which the refusal is founded, of which he, perhaps, is better aware than any other person, or which he does not consider as being any thing to the purpose, that he does not signify in plain terms, that his rule is to "serve those who serve him;" and from that moment does not transfer himself and all those whose votes he *commands*, to the other side, taking what is called the independent line, and exhibiting himself among the first bawlers against the corruptions of the great, "who think of nothing but their own interest?"

Here at least is an instance of abuse, (supposed indeed, but not on that account to be considered as a mere creature of the imagination,) which, while it begins with one of the people, ends there likewise, and does not touch the Government or the parliament at all. And such, we may venture to affirm, is the case of nine-tenths, or rather ninety-nine hundredths of the abuses complained of. The whole country, it is said, is full of abuses from top to bottom. I am very much of that opinion; with this correction, that the description would be more just if we were to say from bottom to top; it being here, with this floating mass of abuses, as with other *media*, the parts of which are left to move freely, that the *strata* are denser, and grosser, the lower you descend, and that the highest region is the purest.

We have already seen to what source may be traced the greater part of the abuse of patronage, an abuse which with the others is to be cured, I suppose, by the favourite remedy, an extension of the representation, that is to say, by multiplying a hundredfold the chief causes to which the abuse is to be at present ascribed. But if of this the far greater part is found to lie in the people themselves, who cannot otherwise be brought to support the very government which they thus reproach for yielding to their venality, what shall we say of those abuses, more properly so called, and upon which the people are much more intent, though they are really perhaps less important, viz. the various instances of fraud, embezzlement, peculation, and imposition, by which the expenditure of the country is swelled far beyond its natural size, and a million or two possibly taken from the pockets of the people, over and above what the real exigencies of the country require? This is the part that we chiefly hear of; and very proper it is that we should hear of it; but let us take care that we impute the blame to the right quarter, that we put the saddle upon the right horse.

With what approach to truth or propriety do we speak of these abuses, as abuses in the Government? Who are the persons whom we mean to designate under the name of Government? What are the abuses complained of? and by what description of persons

are they committed? Is it an abuse in the government, that is, in the members of the cabinet, and the persons holding high offices, including if you please the parliament, that a store-keeper, or commissary, in the West Indies, or in Ceylon, embezzles the public stores, or sends in false accounts, by which the public is defrauded? Is it corruption in the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or in the ministry or parliament collectively, that gross frauds are daily and hourly practised on the revenue; that the taxes are eluded; that false returns are made; that excise and custom-house officers are perpetually bribed to betray their trust; that the tribes of officers, high and low, at home and abroad, of more denominations than can be enumerated, which an empire like this is obliged to employ in its service, are often more intent upon advancing their own fortunes, than upon discharging their duty or guarding the interests of the public; and that all those, not being persons in office, with whom the Government must occasionally have dealings, have no consideration, but how to make the most they can, and to cheat the public by every means in their power? I should be glad to know, how many of these arraigners of the profusion of the Government, if they had a piece of land to sell in the neighbourhood of a barrack or military hospital, would limit the price they asked by any other consideration, than what they thought the necessity of the case would compel Government to give, or would scruple, if they saw any prospect of success, to bribe the barrack-master, or other officer, to betray his trust, and contribute to give effect to their exactions. It is, in the first place, perfect folly to talk as if the parliament and the Government, (the parliament being a body that neither in fact nor theory can know any thing of the matter, and the Government consisting of some ten or twenty persons, the members of the cabinet, and a few of the heads of great departments,) can be responsible for the individual conduct of the thousands and thousands of subordinate officers and agents, who must be employed in the public service, and who are distributed, far and near, through all parts of a widely extended empire: to say nothing of the fact, that the greater part of these are obtruded or palmed upon the government, by persons not being themselves in any office, but in the strictest sense a part of the people, and who are thinking of nothing, but to serve, by whatever means, their own friends and relations. In the next place, these frauds, committed by persons within the pale of the Government, are for the most part of a sort, that imply a confederate without. Like other acts which in the system of animal life cannot well be dispensed with, they require of necessity two parties. If the exciseman connives at the frauds of the brewer or the distiller, it is the distiller and brewer by whom he is bribed to do so. If the custom-house offi-

cer permits false entries, and allows goods to be imported or exported without the proper duties, and thereby affords an example of an abuse committed (if any one choose so to describe it,) by one of the Government, meaning a custom-house officer, what are we to say of the merchant or trader, by whose bribe he has been induced to do this? who, it cannot be disputed, is one of the people, and one of the people merely; and very possibly, with the distiller, brewer, or other trader, one of those who think that the country can never thrive, till a radical reform shall have put an end to abuses. The fact is, that when the matter comes to be searched to the bottom, it is the people throughout, who are cheating the people; the people individually cheating the people collectively, and then finding in their own frauds and knaveries a reason for tearing to pieces the Government. How is Government a party to these frauds? Even in respect to patronage; the part in which the government, properly so called, will be found most to offend: it is not ascribing much to persons, at the head of departments, to suppose, that when their own immediate connections and dependants are satisfied, they would be willing to promote good men rather than bad, if they were not controlled by the insatiable demands of those, whom they cannot disoblige without renouncing the means of carrying on the public service, and who never think for a moment of merit or demerit, or of any thing else, but of providing for those, whom, for some reason or other, they wish to serve. So, in respect to pecuniary abuse or waste, it is no great compliment to a Chancellor of the Exchequer to suppose that he is desirous of making the taxes as productive as possible. We need not look to his virtue or sense of duty as a security for this endeavour. His own interest will be a sufficient pledge, and particularly that interest which it is most the fashion to throw in the teeth of public men, namely, the desire of keeping his place. The crime of Government, therefore, in almost all these instances, is that of not being able, with all its efforts, animated even with the strongest sense of self-interest, to prevent the crimes of others. The people in all quarters and by all opportunities are preying upon the public, and then make it the reproach of the Government that it has not the power to prevent them. Such a reproach might, it is confessed, be well founded, if a failure in the performance of this task on the part of Government, proceeded from neglect, remissness, or want of proper zeal. But besides that interest, as was before observed, concurs here with duty, let us see how the matter stands, on a consideration of what would be in the power of government, supposing exertion to be pushed to the utmost.

What is the sense of supposing that Government must be able to do with respect to the public, what no man is able to do in his

own affairs and family? Who is there that can boast to have established a system of superintendence so complete, or to be blessed with a set of servants of such rare honesty and so attached to his interest, as not to leave him a prey to innumerable abuses, greater or less, in his stables, his still-room, his kitchen, his butler's pantry, in every department, in short, of his household? If this is the case of men acting in the management of their own private affairs, and quickened by every motive of self-interest, as may be predicated with truth probably of every domestic establishment in the kingdom, down even to the most limited, what shall we say of the reasonableness of the expectation, that any zeal or strictness in thirty or forty persons, (or in ten times that number,) who can be described with any propriety as forming the executive Government, shall be able to exclude abuses from the innumerable subordinate departments, over which they are to preside, and which extend over half the globe? The amount of abuse, be it observed, incident to establishments, does not increase merely with the size of the establishment, so as for the abuse in larger establishments to bear the same proportion only to the establishment itself, as it does in smaller ones; it rises at a much greater rate: first, because the superintending power, the number of persons having a direct interest in the well-being of the whole, cannot be multiplied in the proportion of the establishment: secondly, because the parts are further removed from observation: thirdly, on account of the complication and mixture of interests, which increase the combinations far beyond the increase of the number of objects; and, lastly, from the greater laxity apt to prevail in respect to frauds upon large funds, compared with something of stricter feeling which may be hoped for towards funds more limited. We see every day what a total carelessness there is in the expenditure of money, which, being money of the public, seems to belong to nobody. This indifference about expending, will be attended with a correspondent want of scruple in appropriating. As the scale of expenditure becomes larger, the injury sustained by the state from the loss or misapplication of any particular sum becomes less perceptible; and men yield with more facility to the argument, that what is great to them is little to the country, and will never be missed. This is the morality, I fear, of a large portion of the nation, and I am sure, is not least found, as far as any observation of mine ever went, in those who would pass themselves off as the only persons, zealous for the rights, or authorized to speak the sentiments, of the people. Yet with a system of public probity thus relaxed, in the midst of a nation thus disposed to prey upon itself, and upon a scale of expenditure like that which must of necessity prevail in an empire extended as ours now is,

it is thought a reason for breaking up the Government, that it cannot exclude abuses from our establishments, to a degree which few persons find attainable, in the management even of their own domestic concerns. It is our business, no doubt, to keep those abuses as low as possible; and the more corrupt the public is, the more are such exertions necessary: but let us not complain that we do not attain what is not attainable, and, above all, let us understand the fact truly, that the corruptions charged are, except in a few inconsiderable instances, not the corruptions of the Government, but the corruptions of the people which the Government is unable to prevent.

Having thus far examined the nature of the charges, let us inquire a little whether there is any thing which we are bound to yield to the authority of those, by whom they are brought forward. I do not know why the members of this house, or of any other body, are to stand quietly by, and hear themselves stigmatized collectively with all sorts of opprobrious epithets, which they do not feel individually to deserve, without so far retaliating upon their revilers, as to ask with submission, who they are, who, by thus dealing out their invectives to the right and left, seem to arrogate to themselves the character of being the only honest men in the kingdom. We want to know a little upon what they found their pretensions. After defending ourselves as well as we can, we may be allowed to exert a portion of the freedom which they so largely take with us, and request to be informed, what are the pledges which they have given, what the sacrifices which they have made, as vouchers for this integrity and public spirit, which they seem to consider as to be found nowhere but with themselves? A reputation for patriotism seems to require for the attainment of it less than is necessary for the acquisition of any other object, however trivial. Nothing seems to be requisite, but the assurance which gets up and says, I am the only honest man, all others are rogues. Indeed, the former part of the declaration, the testimonial given by the party to his own integrity, seems hardly to be called for: if the abuse of others be sufficiently loud and general, the honesty of the person himself is assumed as matter of course. No trial or examination is necessary, no previous stock of reputation, no evidence from former conduct; the trade of a patriot, like that of an attorney or apothecary, is of the class of those who may be set up without capital. I should be glad to know, for instance, what are the sacrifices which have ever been made by the Honourable Baronet (Sir Francis Burdett) as the foundation of that high tone which he assumes with respect to all unfortunate public men who have ever been in office. I am far from meaning to insinuate (I have no fact to warrant the insinuation), that the Honourable Baronet would not be ready, at

any time, to make all the sacrifices to his principles that could be called for: he might or he might not: but I mean to say, that none such having been called for, none have in point of fact been made. On the contrary, it has so happened that the Honourable Baronet has got by his patriotism, by the natural spontaneous, (unlooked for, if you please,) effects of his patriotism, all that many men have been willing to obtain, or have pursued without obtaining, at the expense of half their fortunes. By this no credit may have been lost to the Honourable Baronet, but none can be gained. Virtue can only be proved by trials and sacrifices. A man cannot show his disinterestedness by what he gets, however honestly he may come by it. No one, surely, will pay so ill a compliment to the Honourable Baronet, or to the country, as to give for a proof of rare and distinguished virtue, that he has never asked a favour of any minister either for himself or for a friend. How many might make the same boast, who yet never thought of inveighing against all the rest of the world as corrupt and dishonest! And after all, what does the boast amount to? With respect to friends, the praise is rather equivocal. A man may happen to have no one, who is at once capable of being served by place or appointment, and for whom he is particularly anxious. And as to office for himself, is it known that the offer was ever made to the Honourable Baronet? or that he himself ever wished it? With a large fortune, and all the comforts and pleasures of life before him, he may never have thought the pride or power of office a compensation for its cares and constraints, or even for the privilege which he now enjoys (and is not sparing in the use of) of railing at those whose opinions and feelings upon that point have been different from his own. The merit of sacrificing office can alone be found among those, for whom office has charms; and upon that principle the Honourable Baronet must not be surprised, though in other respects he will, no doubt, if I look for proofs of political virtue, to be contrasted to any on his part, in quarters from which he would turn with scorn, as from the very hot-beds of all corruption.

What will the friends of the Honourable Baronet say, when they hear me quote for my instance, the conduct of Mr. Pitt? The general career of Mr. Pitt's political life, and his administration of the affairs of this country, during the great crisis in which he latterly acted, I perhaps as little approve as the Honourable Baronet can do; though for reasons altogether different: but one of the very charges which many might bring against Mr. Pitt, (I mean his love of power,) is the pledge of his merit in the instance to which I am alluding, I mean his resignation of power in the year 1801. It is no reproach to Mr. Pitt to say that he was an ambitious man. It may be something of a reproach, though

I am afraid the fact is true, that his ambition showed itself too much in love of power and office. The habits, in fact, of official life had begun so early with him and continued so long, that they must have become a sort of second nature; place and power were almost among the necessities of life to him; yet, with all those feelings upon him, original and acquired; with a possession of power, longer enjoyed and more firmly established than can be found possibly in any other instance, not excepting that of Sir Robert Walpole; with a perception, as quick as man ever had, of what was likely to be useful or prejudicial to him in any political step; Mr. Pitt did not hesitate in withdrawing from office, at the period alluded to, the moment he found it could be no longer held, but upon terms inconsistent, as he thought, with his duty, and derogatory from his character. It is in vain to say, that this might not be an act of pure virtue, but be mixed up with feelings of shame, or pride, or policy, or others of that sort. There is no end of such objections; which, after all, can make no difference here, where we are upon a question of comparison; since, if admitted at all, they must appear equally on both sides of the account. It is just as easy to say, that the Honourable Baronet, in the course which he has pursued, has acted with a view to what he has got, as that Mr. Pitt, on the occasion alluded to, acted with a view to what he did not get. The exact measure of virtue that enters into any act, can be known only to the Searcher of all hearts: we must be content to take for virtue what contains all the usual indications of it, and produces all the effects. There is no reason to suspect the sacrifice thus made by Mr. Pitt, to be less genuine than it purports to be. He did not sacrifice what he did not highly value: and no man was more likely to foresee (what the event proved,) that ministerial power, which owes so much to the length of its continuance, could hardly, after an interruption, be ever completely restored to what it was before. The Honourable Baronet, I have no doubt, had the occasion been offered, would equally have shown that personal considerations had no weight with him when placed in competition with the calls of duty, or even with those of honest fame. But the opportunity, as far as I am aware, has never been afforded him; and no one can be allowed to claim the same credit for what he has only intended and believed himself capable of doing, as others for what they have actually done.

Upon the whole of this subject of the corruptions of the great, we may venture to say, that be their virtue what it may, it is at least *at par* with that of the persons by whom it is arraigned. There are very few men in public life, who could not, if they thought it worth while, if they could bring themselves to be proud of merit so little rare, quote instances of sacrifices which they

had made—to duty, to point-of honour, to estimation of friends, to party spirit, if you please, but to something far superior to the mere sordid desire of profit or emolument,—to which the greater part of these patriotic declaimers could not only show nothing parallel in their own conduct, but which they would not, as far as related to themselves, dream even to be possible.

So much for this great topic of abuses, which is now made the foundation-stone of the system, and gives to the authors of the system all that was wished by the philosopher of old, when, in order to move the world from its basis, he asked for nothing but a place whereon to fix his machine. But far the greater portion of abuses, even of those which do finally reach the Government, proceed from the people themselves. They are the bribes which Government pays to the people, directly or indirectly, to prevent them from pulling the Government to pieces. This is more especially exemplified in that worst and most pernicious species of abuses, though by far the least complained of, the abuse of patronage. But the great mass of abuse, that which forms nine-tenths, at least, or, more probably, ninety-nine hundredths of the whole, and which alone directly affects the pockets of the people, both begins and ends with the people, and consists of the frauds, impositions, embezzlements, and peculations, committed by the tribes of officers, high and low; (with the exception only of the highest;) who, though employed under the Government, can still, in no rational view, be considered otherwise than as part of the people; as well as by all those, who, not being in any, even the most subordinate office, have still occasional dealings with the public, or opportunities in some way or other of turning its interests to their account.

The mode proposed for putting a stop to these abuses, is to reform the parliament: that is to say, to have a scheme of representation, in which, the elections being more popular, the parliament should issue more directly from the general mass of the people, and a larger portion of it in consequence be likely to consist of persons taken from the lower orders, the country in the meanwhile, by the increased number of competitors, and by the means through which they must hope to succeed, being thrown into an additional ferment. The plan, with a view to its professed object, cannot be said either to promise much or to be chosen with very peculiar felicity. It is not an obvious way, for making the liquor run clear, to give a shake to the cask and to bring up as much as possible from the parts nearest the bottom. Could it be believed, without proof from the fact, that men could be found seriously to indulge speculations so destitute of every foundation in reason or common sense? The reform wanted, for the purposes said to be intended, is either a reform of the whole people,

which it is childish to hope, or a reform in the government, by arming it with such new powers, as might indeed answer the end proposed, but would in the mean time be wholly incompatible with the nature of our free constitution.

There are but three ways in which mankind can be governed; by their virtues, their interests, or their fears. To be able to govern men by their sense and their virtues is unquestionably the best of all. If men will be ready always to support gratuitously what they think right, and oppose nothing but what they conscientiously believe to be wrong, the task of government would comparatively be easy, and corruption without excuse. The minister would have nothing to do but to choose right measures; and the merit of the measure might be expected to carry it through. But if the fact should be, that there are numbers who cannot be brought to support even what they themselves approve, without being paid for it, and who if they have not been so paid, or think they can get better payment elsewhere (whether that payment consist in place, or money, or popular applause, or the gratification of some malignant or selfish passion,) will combine and cabal, and create every sort of obstruction and impediment, there is then no other way, in a free government, for the purpose of carrying on the public service, but to gain over such persons by their interests, which, in the language of the time, is to be guilty of corruption; but a corruption surely of which the guilt cannot fairly be charged on the government.

In governments indeed of another sort, such as that which makes so conspicuous a figure in the present times, I mean the government of Buonaparte, the case is altogether different; and no more necessity exists for corruption under such a rule than in a nation of men perfectly wise and virtuous. He (Buonaparte) is under no necessity to bribe men's concurrence to measures that are for the interest of the country, and has, moreover, methods far more effectual than any which free countries possess, to prevent the abuses arising from fraud, or peculations. A man who could hang without ceremony a custom-house officer who should be found conniving at any fraud on the revenue, and hang or send to the galleys the merchant who should bribe him to such connivance, may be pretty sure of confining within reasonable bounds all abuses of that description. The same will be the case with any other species of abuse. But how, in countries where conduct is free, men can be prevented from selling that, which they will not consent to give, and how, where law is formal and scrupulous, and beset on all sides with guards and defences for the protection of innocence, it can be made to retain, in all cases, sufficient energy for the overtaking of guilt, are problems, with which the
 vrs. of these complaints never seem to trouble themselves.

They call boldly and loudly for the suppression of abuses; and if the suppressing abuses was the only object to be attended to, the task would be easy. There is a government in the neighbourhood, the same to which I have just alluded, that tells us how that work is to be done. I will pay so much homage to Buonaparte's government as to say, that it either is, or may be, one of the most free from abuses of any that ever existed. But will the clamourers for this salutary reformation be content to have it upon the same terms? We have seen already, what the nature of the greater part of these abuses is, and from what source they spring. And do not let us take this upon trust. Let those who doubt, go into the inquiry, and examine, one by one, the instances in which they complain that the public money has been transferred wrongfully into the pockets of individuals, or the public patronage perverted, and see what the utmost extent is of that portion, which has been appropriated to the interests of ministers, or of those for whom they were personally anxious.

Upon this issue we may suffer the question to rest, considered as part of a general system, which aims at a great change in the constitution (a subversion of it as I should say) under the name of Reform, and grounds the necessity of such reform upon the extent and number of the subsisting abuses. It remains only that we say a few words upon the more narrow view of the subject, as introduced by the Honourable Mover.

The direct end and object of the motion, as we collect from some passages in his speech, the specific effect which he means to produce, is that of erecting a barrier to the too great influx into this house of the moneyed interest. The means proposed are such as cannot but be approved, if the description of them be true, viz. that they consist entirely in the correction of a practice which is in the highest degree corrupt. The consequences, as usual in all cases where new remedies are advertised, are to extend far beyond the removal of the immediate complaint, and to benefit the constitution in a thousand different ways. It happens whimsically that the primary object of the mover, (a pretty important one, and requiring, one should think, a good deal of nice consideration), namely the altering the balance between the landed and the moneyed interest, seems to be no object at all with those to whom the motion is principally addressed, and not much indeed to the Honourable Mover, if we may judge by the small portion which it has occupied of his speech. It slips in almost by parenthesis. It is lost and hid, in the splendour of the incidental advantages which the motion is to bring with it, in the confidence it is to restore, the unanimity it is to inspire, the heats it is to allay, the effect it is to have in silencing gainsayers, the foundation it is to lay of a new and glorious era, from the commencement of

which nothing will be known throughout the country but one spirit of loyalty and patriotism, and a determination to live and die by the constitution. What a pity that prospects so bright, and which my Honourable Friend contemplates with such unspeakable satisfaction, should be so soon obscured! Never was hope so sanguine, so suddenly blasted! It is nipped in its first bud. It does not live to the second reading. It is consigned to the tomb almost at the moment of its birth.

"Oh just beloved and lost, admired and mourned!"

This medicine, which was to produce such wonderful effects, which was to operate like a charm, so comfortable in the stomach, so exhilarating to the spirits, so restorative of all the vital functions, has totally falsified the first assurance respecting it, namely, that it would be very pleasant to the taste. What it may be in the stomach, or afterwards, we cannot well say; for those for whose special use it was intended, who were to seize it so greedily, find it so little pleasant that they will not suffer it to remain within their lips; but spit it out upon the hands of my Honourable Friend, at the very moment when he is in the act of administering it.

Much useful instruction and information may be derived from this fact, as well to my Honourable Friend as to ourselves. My Honourable Friend, I hope, will learn a lesson, of great utility to all reformers, to distrust a little the more remote consequences of their measures, when they see how liable they are to error, even in those which they expect to take place immediately. The house, it is hoped, will learn this distrust with respect to the measure now proposed. It is no great recommendation of any medicine that its effects are totally mistaken by the person who advises it. All our confidence in the physician is already lost. The only certain knowledge which we have, as yet, of the measure, is, that it will *not* do what the Honourable Mover predicted of it. It will not satisfy those, who at present inveigh against the abuses of the system, and contend that it ought to be reformed. On the contrary, they say that this measure, unless accompanied with others far more extensive, will only make things worse.

I have already endeavoured to show that the practice meant to be corrected, has no crime in it abstractly considered; that it is not a *malum in se*. It is culpable only as it may be made so by law, or as it may practically be found to produce effects injurious to the public interest. When opinion out of doors is urged as a reason for adopting it, the answer is, that opinion out of doors, such as is here in question, is a very bad reason for adopting any measure, inasmuch as there can hardly be a worse criterion of what is really for the public benefit; and that, after all, public opinion does not call for this measure separately and

unaccompanied with certain others, which the Honourable Mover himself would declare that he does not wish to see take place. The inducements, therefore, to a compliance with the present motion lie in a very small compass indeed. They are simply its own merits; for, as to the splendid incidental consequences dwelt upon with such rapture by the Honourable Mover, they are all at an end already. There will be no satisfaction produced. What is called the public will not thank you for the measure, otherwise than as it may be made a subject of triumph and a stepping-stone to other objects. The objections to it on the other hand, are the dangers of this triumph, and of those other objects to which it is meant to lead.

Upon the result of these opposite considerations, first examined separately, and then compared together, I have no hesitation in earnestly conjuring the house not to adopt the motion. The practice complained of has subsisted at all times, without any ground to suspect, or any suspicion being in fact entertained, that, according to the discovery now made, it has been sapping and undermining the constitution. The reasons in support of the measure now proposed for the abolition of the practice are perfectly unsatisfactory and inconclusive. We know the mischievous use intended to be made of it; and there can hardly indeed be any thing more mischievous in the first instance, than the yielding to public clamour, what we do not feel that we are yielding to truth and reason.

After a debate of some length, the motion was agreed to without a division.

MR. CURWEN'S BILL.

THIRD READING.

JUNE 12th, 1809.

The Bill, which occasioned the preceding speech, received in the Committee, on the 8th of June, some material alterations, particularly a clause proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for levying certain penalties on any person procuring his return by any *express* covenant to give any offices by way of consideration for it. Lord Henry Petty moved that the word "*express*" should be omitted, as otherwise, he contended, a power of procuring seats by means of patronage would be left to the Treasury. On a division, the numbers were,

For the Amendment	48
Against it	78
Majority	<u>35</u>

On the 9th, another division took place on an Amendment to the same effect, which was moved by Lord Milton, when the numbers were,

For omitting the word " <i>express</i> "	74
For inserting it	97
Majority	<u>23</u>

On the 12th, Mr. Curwen moved the order of the day for the third reading of the Bill.

Mr. WINDHAM said, that he felt it necessary for him to make some observations, as the bill had been so completely altered in the Committee, that there was danger lest, in voting against it now, after having voted against it before, he should appear to be guilty of inconsistency. It appeared to him as full of objections in its altered as in its original state; although the objections were of a different nature. His former objections rested, first, on the denial of that assumption which was made the foundation of the bill; secondly, that he conceived the reasonings by which it was supported, to be false, and dangerous in the extreme; and, thirdly, that he conceived that it would open the door to infinite mischiefs. As to this implied corruption, if it is what the law had declared corruption, the law, of course, had also pointed out how it was to be punished; and if the utmost attention paid to the subject of these corruptions could produce nothing better than this bill, he thought the old legislators had done very well to stop where they

did. He deprecated the bill originally, because he saw the difficulty of stopping at the point they might wish. It was easy to remove any abuse, if the removal of the abuse was the only thing to be considered, and if no regard need be had of the means to be employed, and of the mischiefs that might ensue. To take off a wen or other excrescence, the butcher would do as well as the surgeon, were no consideration necessary of what might be the consequence of cutting it off unskilfully. The real question would be, whether the patient would not be left in a more dangerous state than that of the original disease, and especially when it was considered that there were numbers who, instead of healing, would perpetually apply caustics to the wound.

He thought the Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Curwen) was himself somewhat inconsistent in voting for a bill so opposite in its nature and tendency to that which he had originally introduced. He seemed to think that it was better to get half his measure than none of it. "Half a loaf," it was said, "is better than no bread," but not so, half a reform. It was a gross error to suppose, as was perpetually done, that the half of an act by which a benefit might be obtained was any thing like half the benefit. For instance, if the grievance complained was a beard of a month's growth, or a pair of those absurd whiskers with which the faces of some of our soldiers were now disgraced, and the barber should say he had not soap enough to hold out for the whole face, but he would shave half of it, would the person so shaved be considered as getting rid of half the grievance? and more especially, if the barber should say, as in the present instance, that although he shaved the hair from one side of the face, it would grow so much thicker on the other, so that there would be precisely the same quantity, although only on one side of the face. That was really the case in the present instance; for, as the Honourable Baronet (Sir F. Burdett) has observed, the removal of the competition of private wealth would increase the power of the treasury. By the amended bill, the Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Curwen) might get half of his measure, but no part of his object.

He considered it most degrading and impolitic for a Government to comply with every temporary popular opinion; but he thought it more degrading still to endeavour to delude the people by giving them what was worse than nothing. The delusion, however, would not pass. The people, he was persuaded, would find out the trick, and would not be made to take Birmingham counters for sterling gold. The preamble, and the first clause of this bill, appeared to be merely calculated to deceive the people, and make them suppose that something was done, which was, in fact, not done. The people, to be sure, collectively considered,

seemed to be made only to be duped. They were resolved always to be duped by somebody. They were duped by those haranguers, who told them that eleven millions and a half of the public expenditure might be saved. They were now about to be duped by ministers, who were ready to pass a bill, holding out a promise which could never be realized.

As to the parental affection which the Honourable Member (Mr. Curwen) had manifested for his bill, it was surely of the oddest sort possible; for it was for a child not his own. The child was a perfect changeling, with no resemblance to the former either in features or colour.

Qui color albus erat, nunc est contrarius albo.

It must have been got by a negro slave. The indifference, too, of the Honourable Gentleman between this and the original bill, was not less extraordinary. It was much the same as in a case that he remembered of a gentleman who made proposals in a family where there were several daughters, and when the father inquired which of his daughters it was that was honoured with his choice, replied, "just which you please." Upon which the father was said to have replied, very properly, "Since you are so indifferent, I think it may as well be neither." The case, however, was stronger here; daughters may differ widely, but they cannot properly be said to be contrary or opposite. "*Substantia substantiæ non contrariatur.*" Whereas, these bills were in that state of opposition as to be mutually destructive of each other. But the Honourable Mover was determined to have a bill, and provided he succeeded in that object, it seemed to be no part of his consideration what the bill was.

The Bill, with the Amendments, was supported by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Solicitor-General, and opposed by Mr. Adam, Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Tierney, and Mr. Wilberforce. On the motion that the Bill do pass, the numbers were,

Ayes	97
Noes	85
Majority	12

The following Amendment was proposed by Lord Folkstone, as a proper title to the Bill:—"A Bill for more effectually preventing the Sale of Seats in Parliament for Money, and for promoting a Monopoly thereof to the Treasury by means of Patronage." On a division, there appeared,

For the original Title	133
For the Amendment	28
Majority	105

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS BILL.

JUNE 13th, 1809.

A Bill "for the more effectual Prevention of Cruelty towards Animals," had been brought into the House of Peers by Lord Erskine, and having passed that House without a division, it had been read a second time in the House of Commons, on Sir Charles Bunbury's motion, also without a division. On the motion for going into a Committee upon this Bill, Mr. WINDHAM addressed the chair in the following speech :

SIR,

My first and general objection to this bill is, that the object of it, however commendable, is not such as to make it a fit subject of legislation.

For this opinion I have at least a pretty strong voucher, in the universal practice of mankind down to the present moment. In no country has it ever yet been attempted to regulate by law the conduct of men towards brute animals, except so far as such conduct has operated to the prejudice of men. The province of criminal legislation has hitherto been confined to the injuries sustained by men.

This fact, though affording a pretty strong presumption, (sufficient, one should think, to make us pause and not hurry through the house, with hardly any discussion, a bill of so novel a character,) is yet, I will confess, not absolutely conclusive. It may be right, that "all this should be changed;" that what is now proposed, should be done, though it has never been done before. But the question is, at least, of some importance, and not to be decided without great care and a most cautious consideration of all the consequences. The novelty of the subject, (not in its details or particular application, but in its general character,) is a topic brought forward and insisted upon, not by the opposers of the bill as an objection, but by its authors as a merit. In a pamphlet, circulated with great industry, (and of equal authority, as coming from the same source with the bill itself,) it is expressly stated, and with no small triumph, that the bill will form a new era of legislation.

Two reflections arise upon this: first, that we ought to take care, (to be cautious at least,) how we begin new eras of legislation; secondly, that we ought to have a reasonable distrust of the founders of such eras, lest they should be a little led away by an object of such splendid ambition, and be thinking more of them-

selves than of the credit of the laws or the interests of the community. To do that which no one yet has ever thought of doing; to introduce into legislation, at this period of the world, what has never yet been found in the laws of any country, and that too for a purpose of professed humanity, (or rather of something more than humanity, as commonly understood and practised;) to be the first who has stood up as the champion of the rights of brutes, is as marked a distinction, even though it should not turn out upon examination to be as proud a one, as a man can well aspire to.

The legislature, however, must not be carried away with these impulses, of whatever nature they may be, but must consider soberly and coolly, whether it may not have been something more than mere indifference or want of thought that for so many thousand years has kept men from attempting to introduce this new principle, as it is now justly called, of legislation, and whether those who engage in the attempt at present, may not do far more harm than good.

Of the desirableness of the object, speaking abstractedly, there can be no doubt. As far as mere uninstructed wishes go, every man must wish, that the sufferings of all animated nature were less than they are. Why they are permitted at all, is a question, as has been observed by a great and pious writer,* which must for ever continue to perplex mankind, as long as we are allowed to see only in part.

But there is not only the wish that suffering universally should, if possible, be less than it is; there is a duty, I am ready to admit, upon man (the only animal, it is to be observed, that takes cognizance of others' pain†), to conform himself to that wish, in the little sphere to which his influence extends. Morality itself may perhaps be defined, "a desire rationally conducted to promote general happiness," and consequently to diminish general pain;

* Dr. Johnson's Review of Soame Jenyns on the Origin of Evil.

† Compassion proper to mankind appears,
Which Nature witness'd, when she lent us tears:
Of tender sentiments we only give
This proof; to weep is our prerogative.

TRANS. OF JUVENAL.

And further on in the Original,

Separat hoc nos,
A grege mutorum: atque ideo venerabile soli
Sortiti ingenium, divinorumque capaces,
* * * * *
Sensum à cœlesti demissum traximus Arce,
Cujus egent prona et terram spectantia,

and I am far from contending, that the operation of that principle, so glorious to man, should not be made to embrace in its effects the whole of animal life. Let the duty be as strongly enforced, as far as precept and persuasion can go, and the feeling be as largely indulged as its most eager advocates can wish. I have no objection to any sacrifices, which any one may be disposed to make in his own person, for sparing the pain or promoting the enjoyment of others of his fellow-creatures, whether men or inferior animals. The more lively the sympathy, within certain limits, and the greater the sacrifice, the more will be the amiableness and the merit. Within certain limits, I have said, because, theoretically, there do appear to be limits, which those feelings cannot pass, without defeating, instead of promoting, the ends of Providence, which must be presumed to have intended them as the means of attaining the greatest *quantum* of happiness. Sympathy seems to be necessary to the production of virtue, as well as for securing a better use of those powers, which man is allowed to possess for the good or harm both of his own species and of other portions of animal life. But were every one to feel with equal sensibility the pains of others as his own, the world must become one unvaried scene of suffering, in which the woes of all would be accumulated upon each, and every man be charged with a weight of calamity beyond what his individual powers of endurance are calculated to support.

There is little danger, however, of this excess. One may safely lay it down as a rule, that the more any one feels for the suffering of others, the more virtuous he should be accounted; and that he is at liberty, in this respect, to give a full loose to his feelings.

But the very same considerations will make it dangerous to allow of systems in which men are to become virtuous at others' expense, and be armed with powers to enforce upon others those sympathies and feelings which may be wanting in themselves. It is not sufficient to state of any thing, that it is matter of obligation, to justify an attempt to enforce it by law. Laws are almost universally restrictive. They restrain acts which are injurious to the community, and which are such moreover as can be clearly defined. There are whole classes of duties, known to writers on morals under the name of Imperfect Obligations, which no one ever thought of enforcing by law; not because they are, in point of moral duty, less obligatory than others, but because they are of a nature that, to exist at all, must be spontaneous, or are such as that law cannot be made to apply to them. What idea can any one have of a law to enforce charity, gratitude, benevolence, or innumerable others of the Christian virtues? If a man with thousands in his coffers, and of which, perhaps, he makes no use, should suffer a fellow-creature, whose case is fully known to him,

to perish in the next street for want of a few shillings, you might inveigh as bitterly as you pleased, and as he most justly would deserve, against his want of humanity; but would you ever think, that there ought to be a law to punish him? The same may be said of cases that occur, I fear, too frequently, under the influence of the poor-laws, where paupers at the point of death, and women expecting at every moment to be seized with the pangs of labour, are turned out into the streets or roads, sooner than by the death in the one case, or the birth in the other, a burthen should be brought upon the parish. The poor-laws are an example of an attempt to force charity; and fine encouragement they give to such attempts! But after all that they have done,—unfortunately done,—how much is left, which the law does not attempt to reach!

It will not be difficult to show, that the case is much the same in respect to the objects now meant to be provided for. The measure sets out with a preamble, containing a lofty maxim of morality or theology, too grand to be correct, too sublime to be seen distinctly, and most ludicrously disproportioned to the enactments that follow; wherein it is declared that God has *subdued* various classes of animals to the use and benefit of man; and from thence it seems to be inferred, not very consequentially, that we ought to treat them with humanity.—That we ought to treat with humanity, that is, that we ought, in all we do respecting them, to have a consideration of their pains and pleasures, is a maxim which I am not at all disposed to controvert; but it does not seem immediately inferrible from the permission before recited. If humanity indeed be carried to its utmost extent, it must rather have the effect of abridging that permission, and of leading us, like the Gentoos, at least to abstain from eating the animals thus consigned to us, if not from using them in any way that should not be productive to them of more gratification than suffering. The humanity, however, that is now recommended, is not meant, it seems, to go that length. We may destroy them for the purposes of food, that is, of appetite and luxury, to whatever amount, and in whatever ways those purposes require. Another class of us, likewise, namely the rich, may destroy them, in any modes, however lingering and cruel, which are necessary for the purposes of *sport* and *diversion*. Even independently of the doubt which these striking exceptions create, we may ask reasonably, what is humanity? Is it any thing capable of being defined by precise limits? or is it a mere question of degree, and something consequently which is not capable of being set forth in words, but must be left to the decision of some living tribunal, giving its judgment upon each particular case?

Here we come back to the first and fundamental objection, to legislating upon this, and various similar subjects. You inflict

pains and penalties, upon conditions which no man is able previously to ascertain. You require men to live by an unknown rule. You make the condition of life uncertain by exposing men to the operation of a law, which they cannot know till it visits them in the shape of punishment.

What is humanity? It is generally the having a consideration for the sufferings of others (men or other sentient beings,) as compared with pains or gratifications of our own. But what the proportion is necessary to be observed between our own and others' pain, or, (as is oftener the case in the subject now under consideration,) what the proportion is between others' pain and our pleasure or interest, no mortal attempts to ascertain; nor is it one and the same, but as various as there are various men, and various circumstances and subjects to which it is applied. It is not only not the same in any two men, but not the same in the same man for half an hour together, being changed, according as he applies it to one case or another, or is in one humour or another, or, above all, is judging in the case of others or of himself. This is no exaggerated representation. As a proof, let any man go through the instances where his humanity has been shocked at one time, and where at others it has remained perfectly in repose.

The instances of ill treatment of animals, which most frequently occur, (and are most in the view of the advocates of this bill,) are those which arise from passion; a coachman whipping his coach-horses, a carman beating his cart-horse. The undisturbed spectator, who knows nothing of the causes that have led to this, and who, as Swift says of men bearing others' misfortunes, can bear the provocations which have inflamed another, "perfectly like a Christian," is full of virtuous ire, and inveighs hotly against the man who can thus go into a senseless passion with his horse; but he does not consider that the irritability here shown may have come upon a man wearied by long labour, and soured by some recent vexation, and have been excited withal by something in the horse which he has been led, foolishly for the most part, to consider as perverseness; nor does the blamer recollect, how he himself, the day before, when he was riding comfortably to get an appetite for his dinner, spurred his horse most unmercifully (as violently as his fears would let him), because the animal had been guilty of starting or stumbling.

Here is an instance of that different standard of humanity, which men have in their breasts for themselves or others, for their cooler and for their passionate moments; and we may thence see what flagrant and scandalous injustice would be done, under a criterion subject to such variation.

It is no answer to say, that the judgment would not be unjust, merely because the judge might have been guilty of the same

offence: and that as he might punish others, others might punish him. The judge, we know, would not be punished. Few would inform against His Worship, the 'Squire, because he had rode his hunter to death, or unmercifully whipped, or, in a fit of passion, shot his pointer. The scandal therefore in the general administration of the law would remain, even though those who were convicted were punished justly.

But it is not true, that passion would not be mixed even in the judgment itself. Passion may be suspected to mix itself, and does in fact continually mix itself, in all judgments carried on by close and summary jurisdictions, and by persons who are little likely to be made responsible for their conduct. Such jurisdictions must of necessity perhaps exist in many cases, and where the necessity can be shown, must be submitted to; but they are not on that account the less to be deprecated, or more fit to be adopted where their establishment must be a matter of choice. There is, in truth, one general passion applicable to the present case, which would not fail to operate in every part of the process; in the judgment often, but still more frequently in the information; and which will form a complete answer to that childish plea in favour of the bill, viz. that as no reward is given, no temptation will be held out to informers.

The passion here alluded to is one of great account in human nature, though not so often noted as it ought to be, namely, the love of tormenting. There was a book written some years ago, commonly ascribed to a sister of the author of Tom Jones, but really the work of a lady of the name of Collyer, which treats this passion, under the title of 'The Art of ingeniously Tormenting;' and after illustrating, with great acuteness and much nice observation of character and manners, its operation in various relations of domestic life,—as, how to torment an humble companion, how a wife should torment her husband, and a husband his wife,—concludes with a chapter, entitled, 'General Rules how to torment all your acquaintance.' It will be found by any one who may peruse this book, how much there is of this principle continually in operation, of which the peruser has often witnessed the effects, without at the time having understood or attended to the cause.

But frequent as these instances are, as seen and described by the author referred to, they are nothing in extent and amount to those which are carried on, under a new and more enlarged head, which did not come within the scheme of her work, nor fall, possibly, within the scope of her contemplation, viz. the art of tormenting people in the name of the public good, an art which seems to have been gaining ground considerably in our days, and to have had a larger share in the acts of the legislature, as well

as to have produced more annoyance in society, than people are commonly aware of. Here the trade of course is wholesale, and carried on upon a large scale. And it is not to be told, how eager the passion is, when animated and sanctioned by the auxiliary motive of supposed zeal for the public service. It is childish of people to ask, What pleasure can any one have in tormenting others? None in the mere pain inflicted, but the greatest possible in the various effects that may accompany it,—in the parade of virtue and in the exercise of power. A man cannot torment another without a considerable exercise of power,—in itself a pretty strong and general passion. But if he can at once exercise his power and make a parade of his virtue (which will eminently be the case in the powers to be exercised under this law), the combination of the two forms a motive, which, we may fairly say, flesh and blood cannot withstand. Young's 'universal passion' has not a wider range, nor a stronger influence, than the union of these two feelings.

In what a state then should we put the lower orders of people in this country (for they are the only persons who would be affected), when, for the sake of punishing some rare and hardly heard-of enormities, (the narrow but only rational object of the measure,) we should let loose upon them a principle of action like that above described, armed with such a weapon as this bill would put into its hands? All the fanatical views and feelings, all the little bustling spirit of regulation, all the private enmities and quarrels would be at work, in addition to those more general passions before stated, and men would be daily punished by summary jurisdiction, or left to wait in gaol for the meeting of a more regular tribunal, for offences, which are incapable of being defined, and which must be left therefore to the arbitrary and fluctuating standard which the judge in either case might happen to carry in his breast. The bill, instead of being called, A Bill for preventing Cruelty to Animals, should be entitled, A Bill for harassing and oppressing certain Classes among the lower Orders of His Majesty's Subjects.

The manner in which it would be thrown upon them, and the scandalous injustice with which it would be attended, may be exemplified by one of the instances set forth by the authors of the bill themselves. The cruelties suffered by post-horses are a favourite topic. But on whom is the punishment to fall? On the post-boy, or on the traveller? On the post-boy, who is the only person who would be seen inflicting these severities? Or on the traveller, who sits snug in the chaise, having only hinted to the post-boy, that he meant to dine at the next stage, and that if he should not bring him in in time, he would never go to his master's house again, nor give him any thing for himself.

This case of post-horses belongs also to another head, to which I will now proceed; namely, the objections that lie against the bill on the score that it is doing that by law, which, if people are sincere in their feelings, may be done by other methods.

Laws never ought to be called in but where other powers fail. Upon whom is the whole force of this bill to be discharged? what are the instances which are uppermost in every one's mind, which have been first cited as proofs of the necessity of such a measure, and in which indeed the bill either will or is intended to act? Why, the cruelties inflicted on horses by grooms, coachmen, post-boys, carmen, servants in husbandry, or others, to whom such animals are entrusted. But whose property are these animals? Why, the property of persons, who have some (generally great) power respectively over the several classes of persons above enumerated. Why do not these masters and owners exert themselves in earnest, in punishing such offences whenever they come within their cognizance, or are even known to them in a way which, though not sufficient possibly for a legal process, would be abundantly sufficient for all the purposes that are here in question? But, no; they are often the direct parties, the parties interested in, and the parties instigating, the very cruelties or severities which they affect to decry.

One of the favourite instances in the fashionable female circles, as they are called, of this town, and who appear, by-the-by, to have been very diligently canvassed, are the cases with which the members of these societies have been continually shocked, of coachmen whipping their horses in public places: an instance, by the way, by no means of magnitude enough to call for the interference of the legislature. But be its magnitude what it will, why must the legislature be called in? are there not means (sufficient probably for punishing the offence adequately in each instance, but certainly for preventing the practice,) in the power possessed by masters and mistresses? But apply to any of these ladies, and satisfy them, after much difficulty, that their coachman was the most active and the most in the wrong, in the struggle, which caused so much disturbance at the last Opera, and the answer probably will be, "Oh! to be sure; it is very shocking; but then John is so clever in a crowd! the other night at Lady Such-a-one's, when all the world were perishing in the passage, waiting for their carriages, ours was up in an instant, and we were at Mrs. Such-a-one's half an hour before any one else. We should not know what to do, if we were to part with him." Is it the coachman here, who most deserves punishment? or is it for the parties here described to call for a law, which is to lay the foundation of a new era of legislation, and to operate with great severity and most flagrant injustice upon whole classes of people?

A similar instance will be found in the case just alluded to, of the traveller and the post-horses. Whose fault is it, in nineteen cases out of twenty, that these sufferings are incurred? The traveller drives up in haste, his servant having half-killed one post-horse in riding forward to announce his approach; the horses are brought out; they are weak, spavined, galled, hardly dry from their last stage. What is the dialogue that ensues? Does the traveller ever offer to stop on his journey, or even wait till the horses can be refreshed? Such a thought never enters his head; he swears at the landlord, and threatens never to come again to his house, because he expects to go only seven miles an hour, when he had hoped to go nine; when the landlord has assured him, that the horses, however bad in their appearance, will carry His Honour very well, and has directed the "lads" to "make the best of their way," the traveller's humanity is satisfied, and he hears with perfect composure and complacency the cracking whips of the postilions, only intimating to them, by-the-bye, that if they do not bring him in in time, they shall not receive a farthing.

What revolting and disgusting hypocrisy is it in persons daily witnessing without remonstrance, or acting in such scenes, who will not sacrifice the smallest particle of their convenience in consideration of any pain that is to result from it, to be inveighing, with such exaggerated sensibility, against the cruelties practised on the brute creation, and calling for a law to punish them; much of that cruelty being incurred in their service, and under their immediate inspection and orders! Where is the justice of punishing the innkeeper here, who, if he refuses his horses, loses his customers and his means of livelihood, or the post-boy, who, when once employed, must perform the task assigned him by such means as he has, and must ply his whip, till the pain or threat overcomes the pain of the effort, which is requisite to carry the horses through their stage?

Such, Sir, are the proofs of the injustice of the law, and such are the proofs that no law, just or unjust, is necessary, even in the cases to which it applies.

But what shall be said of the flagrant and horrid injustice, of withdrawing from its operation and cognizance, a whole class of cases, which, if such a bill be to pass, could not, one should think, be allowed to stand an instant, as being more than any others, in the very line and point-blank aim of the statute, and having nothing to protect them, but that which ought, in justice and decency, to be the strongest reason against them; namely, that they are the mere sports of the rich? Is it to be endured or believed, that a legislature setting about the great and original work of enacting laws to prevent the sufferings of the brute creation, should still reserve to themselves, and that too by a most severe and invidious

code, the privilege of killing animals, by a cruel and lingering death, in mere sport and wantonness? The reason assigned for this extraordinary omission, by the author of the bill, may be suspected as having been intended as a mere mockery. It is said that being *feræ naturæ* (a learned distinction, but never before, surely, so whimsically applied), they are not entitled to the protection of man. But why, because they do not ask his protection, are they to be liable in consequence to be persecuted and tormented by him? On the contrary, if he does nothing for their good, he ought the rather to be required to do nothing for their harm. They would perish, it is said, if left to themselves, often by a cruel death. But what is the animal, man not excepted, that is not liable so to perish? If this argument be good for any thing, it may justify, in pure kindness, our killing one another. Another danger is, that they would become so numerous as to overrun the earth. But this danger, formidable as it may be in respect to other animals, certainly does not apply to one great class, with which, notwithstanding, we make pretty free, namely, the fishes.

After all, when humanity is the question, what connection is there between the necessity of destroying those animals and the right which we claim of being ourselves the destroyers? It is very public-spirited, no doubt, in all the higher orders of people to offer themselves gratuitously as vermin-killers to the rest of the community; but it is an odd choice for them, as men of humanity; particularly as it is found, that these vermin are encouraged and protected for the sake of being afterwards killed, and certainly by a mode of destruction, in many instances, not capable of being exceeded in cruelty by any to which they could naturally be liable. Even in the case of sheep and oxen, which must, it is admitted, be killed, and might be killed possibly by a gentleman with as little pain as by the butcher, we should think it an odd taste in any one, to be desirous literally to kill his own mutton and to beg of his butcher that he might be allowed on the next slaughter-day to take his place.

It is in vain therefore by such wretched evasions and subterfuges to attempt to disguise the fact, that if with such a preamble on our statutes, and with acts passed in consequence to punish the lower classes for any cruelty inflicted upon animals, we continue to practise and to reserve in great measure to ourselves, the sports of hunting, shooting, and fishing, we must exhibit ourselves as the most hardened and unblushing hypocrites that ever shocked the feelings of mankind. I do not know any thing, that could so justly call for a measure, which I have always been among the first to resist, a Parliamentary Reform. Strongly as I have always urged against such a measure, as wholly uncalled-for by any in the practice of parliament as now constituted, I must

fairly confess, that if it should appear in any instance that so scandalous a distinction could be made between the interests of high and low, rich and poor, I should be not a little shaken in my opposition, and must be driven in a great measure from that argument, which, as long as it can be maintained, is conclusive against every such proposal, namely, that there is no class in the community whose interests, even as parliament is at present constituted, are not upon the whole fairly taken care of. What a pretty figure must we make in the world, if in one column of the newspapers we should read a string of instances of men committed under 'the Cruelty Bill,' some to the county-gaol to wait for trial at the assizes, some by summary process to the house of correction; and in another part an article of 'Sporting Intelligence,' setting forth the exploits of my Lord Such-a-One's hounds;—how the hounds threw off at such a cover; that bold Reynard went off in a gallant style, &c. and was not killed till after a chase of ten hours; that of fifty horsemen who were out at the beginning not above five were in at the *death*; that three horses *died* in the field, and *several* it was thought would never *recover*; and that upon the whole it was the most glorious day's *sport* ever remembered since the pack was first set up! Is it possible that men could stand the shame of such statements? That this house, which tolerates such sports, nay, which claims them, as the peculiar privilege of the class to which it belongs, a house of hunters and shooters, should, while they leave these untouched, be affecting to take the brute creation under their protection; and be passing bills for the punishment of every carter or driver, whom an angry passenger should accuse of chastising his horse with over-severity?

I beg not to be understood, as condemning the sports, to which I have been alluding, and much less, as charging with cruelty all those who take delight in them, cruel as the acts themselves undoubtedly are. I will not dispute with my friend, the Honourable Mover (Sir Charles Bunbury), what the *quantum* of cruelty is in horse-racing; whether the whip is always as much spared as he supposes, or whether, when it is, the forbearance proceeds from humanity, or from an opinion that more would be lost by the horse's swerving and the rider's seat being rendered unsteady than would be gained by the pain. Though no sportsman myself, I shall lament the day, should it ever arrive, when, from false refinement and mistaken humanity, what are called field-sports (or sports indeed of almost any kind), shall be abolished in this country, or fall into disuse. So far from arraigning those who follow them, my doctrine has ever been, that strange as it may seem, cruel sports do not make cruel people: and I will quote for this the great body of the English country gentlemen, and of the English people, now and in all former times.

But still while these practices are permitted, beneficial as I may think them in their general consequences, but cruel as they certainly are in their immediate effects, I can never consent, that the house should go off into such a wild and frantic act of hypocrisy, as to hold itself out, all at once, for the champion of the brute creation, to an extent unattempted yet in the laws of any country. I deny, generally speaking, the existence of the abuses complained of. I deny at least the increase of them, and that the treatment of animals is worse now than in former times, or with us than in other countries. There is in general, no doubt, a very coarse and harsh treatment of them, such as may be expected from the coarseness of the people to whose care they are for the most part committed; but even this is often founded more in ignorance and unskilfulness, than in malice or ferocity. Such as it is, however, let it be corrected by all the means that can with propriety be applied; by reproof, by discountenance, by example, by admonition, by punishments finally of various kinds that might with ease be resorted to, and be made abundantly sufficient for their purpose, were not men more ready on all occasions to call for new laws, than to tax their own selfish indolence by a due exertion of the powers which they already possess. Many of these instances are moreover falsely estimated by those who allow their sensibilities (always prompt and eager in their application to others) to outrun their judgment. It has happened to me as often as to my neighbours, to have squabbles with carmen and drivers of different descriptions for ill treating their horses: but I have more than once had reason afterwards to think myself in the wrong, and that my complaints have been ill-founded, or were, at least, overcharged.

Instances are however unquestionably to be met with, of shocking and atrocious cruelty, which every one must wish to have the means of punishing. A case of this sort, known or related, instantly inflames men's minds, and disposes them, without further consideration, to call for a law. But a law is a serious thing, and ought not to be adopted, merely upon such impulses. There has grown up in the country, of late years, a habit of far too great facility in the passing of laws. The immediate object only is looked to; some marked cases are selected, in which the intended operation of the law coincides with the general feeling: but no account is taken of the numerous instances of individuals who would silently become its victims, and of the depredations which it would make on the general happiness and security of persons in lower life.

It is always a question, whether the good effects of a law, in a few rare instances, are a compensation for the general constraint imposed by it, and the cases in which it will operate unjustly. Or is it true, that in the very instances that will be adduced on

behalf of the present bill, the crime will go (or at least need go) unpunished, even though there be no law specially provided for the purpose. What will be the number of cases, for example, in which the animal ill-treated is not the property of some one, who, if his zeal for humanity be what the clamours of the advocates for this bill would seem to indicate, may surely, either by himself, or with the aid of others, inflict ample punishment on the offender, on the score of mere pecuniary injury? But even where means for that purpose cannot be had, or an injury of that description cannot be pleaded, the mere publication of the fact, which may be the work of any one, with the steps that may be taken to turn upon it the public attention and indignation, will produce in the end consequences as severe as any that the case requires, or that can be hoped for from a law. If there be not virtue or humanity enough in the country to make the commission of such outrages ruinous to the party even in point of fortune and circumstances, to hunt down such offenders by a general exclusion from all the benefits of intercourse, and by marking them out as objects of general detestation, it may well be doubted what the effect of a law would be, and whether among those who call for such a law, there is not more of a fondness for persecution, and lust of power depending for its exertion on little else than their own will, than of real concern for the interests of humanity.

It must at all events be more by manners than by laws, that any good can be done upon this subject. Animals used in the service of man, are left unavoidably so entirely at his mercy, are exposed so much to clandestine mischief, and can so little make known their own injuries, that it will always be a question, whether an attempt to protect them with vindictive justice, will not subject them to more ill-treatment than it is likely to guard them from. If manners cannot protect them, miserable indeed must be their condition, in spite of all that law can do for them. It is not possible, in the nature of things, that law can with so much precision define the duty, as to be able to ensure to the breach of it the intended punishment, without trusting more than in the imperfect state of human jurisdictions it is fit to trust to the discretion of the magistrate. It is a duty evidently of that sort which are called 'imperfect obligations;' of which the definition is, that though equally binding in conscience with other duties, they are not capable of being enforced by law. They must in consequence be left to morals. Let them be inculcated upon that footing in every possible way, from the pulpit, from the press, by precept, by exhortation, by example. But let us not run counter to the nature of things, by attempting, what, the authors of the bill itself tell us, was never yet attempted: and above all things let us not bring in such a bill as the present, which, without contributing

possibly in the smallest degree to the very object in view, will let loose a most cruel scourge upon the lower orders of the people, will commit the most flagrant injustice in the manner in which the bill will be executed, and constitute a general charge of injustice against the house, such as it has never before been exposed to, and from which it will be impossible to vindicate it.

Sir, the objections to the bill are indeed so numerous, and of such a nature, that I am satisfied it would never have proceeded so far as to be now a subject of discussion in the House of Commons, if those who are really adverse to it would fairly have stood by their opinion, and had not been awed by the apprehension, that in opposing a bill, directed to objects apparently so praiseworthy, and supported by topics so plausible and popular, however ultimately fallacious, they should render their own humanity questionable, and even expose themselves to be considered as the direct abettors and advocates of cruelty. I have no doubt that such will be the charge made against me. But to that I must be content to submit, sooner than fail in the duty of opposing a measure so objectionable as I think this to be, in every view in which it can be contemplated.

I should have no fear in trusting my justification to the reasons I have already given, much as they fall short of what I might urge upon the subject, if I were not unwilling to trespass further on the attention of the house. But whatever has been wanting on my part will be amply supplied by an admirable paper in a late publication,* in which will be found much masterly discussion upon this subject, considered in a point of view in which, for the present, I have abstained from speaking of it, namely, in its connection with the Society for the Suppression of Vice. As well with a view to that Society as to the present subject, and to the connection between the two, I earnestly recommend to Gentlemen the perusal of that paper.

Sir, I shall now propose to negative the motion for the Speaker's leaving the Chair, for the purpose of moving afterwards that the bill be committed to this day three months.

Mr. Stephen, Mr. Jekyll, Sir Samuel Romilly, Mr. Morris, and Lord Porchester, spoke in favour of the Bill. Mr. Davies Giddy, Mr. Frankland, Mr. Perceval, and the Solicitor-General doubted the necessity of it. The house divided.

For going into the committee	40
Against it	27
Majority	13

But on a subsequent day, on a motion that the House should go into a Committee on the Bill, Mr. Windham moved as an Amendment, that the Bill should be committed that day three months. Upon a division, there appeared,

For the committee	27
Against it	37
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Majority against the Bill	10
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The Bill was of course thrown out.

In the next session, the Bill was again brought into the House of Peers by Lord Erskine, with some alterations, and was read a first and second time, and committed; but it was subsequently withdrawn by the Noble Framer of it, who stated that he hoped to be able soon to prepare some other measure on this subject which would receive the unanimous vote of the House.

WALCHEREN EXPEDITION.

MARCH 30th, 1810.

AFTER a long investigation, and the examination of many witnesses at the Bar of the House, on the subject of the Expedition to the Scheldt, Lord Porchester, on the 26th March, moved the following Resolutions: *

"1. That, on the 28th of July last, and subsequent days, an armament, consisting of 39,000 land forces, 37 sail of the line, two ships of 50, three of 44 guns, 24 frigates, 31 sloops, five bomb-vessels, 23 gun-brigs, sailed on the late expedition to the Scheldt, having for its object the capture or destruction of the enemy's ships, either building at Antwerp or Flushing, or afloat on the Scheldt; the destruction of the arsenals and dock-yards at Antwerp, Torneux, and Flushing; the reduction of the Island of Walcheren; and the rendering, if possible, the Scheldt no longer navigable for ships of war.

"2. That Flushing surrendered on the 15th of August, whereby the reduction of the Island of Walcheren was completed: and that on the 27th of August, all attempts on the fleets and arsenals of the enemy at Antwerp were, by the unanimous opinion of the Lieutenant-Generals, declared to be impracticable, and were abandoned.

"3. That the destruction of the basin, dock-yard, arsenal, magazines, and naval store-houses, of the town of Flushing, and of such part of the sea-defences as it was found proper to destroy, having been effected on the 11th of December, the Island of Walcheren was, on the 23d of December, evacuated by his Majesty's forces, and the expedition ended.

"4. That it does not appear to this House, that the failure of this expedition is imputable to the conduct of the army or the navy in the execution of their instructions, relative to the military and naval operations in the Scheldt.

"5. That, on the 19th of August, a malignant disorder showed itself among His Majesty's troops; and that, on the 8th of September, the number of sick amounted to upwards of 10,948 men.

"6. That it appears, by the report of the physicians appointed to investigate the nature and causes of the malady to which His Majesty's troops were thus exposed, that the disease is one which prevails periodically in the Islands of Zealand, and is of peculiar malignity there, and which constantly follows a law of season, appearing towards the end of summer, becoming more severe in the autumnal months, declining in October, and nearly ceasing in November. That perfect recoveries are rare, convalescence never secure, and that the recurrence of fever quickly lays the foundation of complaints which render a large proportion of the sufferers inefficient for future military purposes.

"7. That of the army which embarked for service in the Scheldt, 60 officers and 3900 men, exclusive of those killed by the enemy, had died before the 1st of February last, and on that day, 217 officers, and 11,269 men, were reported sick.

"8. That the expedition to the Scheldt was undertaken under circumstances which afforded no rational hope of adequate success, and at the precise season of the year when the malignant disease which has proved so fatal to His Majesty's brave troops was known to be most prevalent; and that the advisers of this ill-judged enterprise are, in the opinion of this House, deeply responsible for the heavy calamities with which its failure has been attended."

There was also a second set of Resolutions, as follows, relating to the retention of the Island of Walcheren :—

"1. That Lieutenant-General Sir Eyre Coote having, on the 9th of September, been left in the command of Walcheren, with an army of about 15,000 men, did, on that day, make an official report on the state of the island, the extent of force required effectually to guard it, the nature and condition of its defences, and the number of men then sick and unfit for duty; representing, that after such his exposition, His Majesty's ministers would be the best judges of the propriety or possibility of keeping the island; and adding, that the advantages must be great, indeed, which could compensate the loss of lives and treasure which the retention must necessarily occasion.

"2. That, on the 23d of September, Sir Eyre Coote stated to His Majesty's ministers, that the alarming progress of disease was such, that if it should continue, in the same proportion, for three weeks longer (as, he added, there was every probability that it would), our possession of the island must become very precarious.

"3. That, on the 6th of October, Sir Eyre Coote, after stating that the number of sick was increasing, and that the effective force was thereby rendered so trivial, as to make the defence of the island, if it should be attacked, extremely precarious, did express his anxiety to be informed of the intentions of His Majesty's Government as to the future state of Walcheren.

"4. That, notwithstanding these, and many other pressing representations, on the alarming condition of the troops, and the danger to which they were exposed, His Majesty's ministers did neglect to come to any decision until the 4th of November, and that the final evacuation of Walcheren did not take place until the 23d of December.

"5. That, on the 10th of September, the number of sick in the Island of Walcheren was, exclusive of officers, 6,938; and that the total number of sick embarked for England, between the 15th of September and the 16th of November, was 11,199, making in that period an increase of sick of 4,268.

"6. That although the great object of the expedition had been abandoned as impracticable, a large proportion of the British army was (without any urgent or determined purpose in view, or any prospect of national advantage to justify such a hazard, or to compensate such a sacrifice) left by His Majesty's ministers to the imminent danger of attack from the enemy, and ex-

posed during a period of more than three months, and under circumstances of aggravated hardships, to the fatal ravages of a disease, which on the 31st of August had been officially announced to be daily increasing to a most alarming degree.

"7. That such the conduct of His Majesty's advisers calls for the severest censure of this House."

Lord Castlereagh defended the measure of the expedition at great length, and the House adjourned.

On the 27th March, Mr. Ponsonby supported the Resolutions, and Lieutenant-General Crauford opposed them. The latter concluded by moving, as an Amendment, two Resolutions, the first of them justifying the measure of the expedition, on account of the great increase in the enemy's naval armaments, and also as a diversion in favour of Austria; and in the other Resolution, after expressing regret that so many valuable lives had been lost, the retention of Walcheren was declared to be necessary on account of the state of the negotiations between Austria and France.

On the 29th March, Mr. Grattan and Mr. Whitbread spoke at length in favour of the Original Resolutions, and Mr. Canning against them.

On the 30th, Sir Thomas Turton, Sir Francis Burdett, and Mr. Bathurst, gave their support to Lord Porchester's Resolutions. General Loftus and Mr. Peel spoke in favour of the Amendment.

MR. WINDHAM addressed the Chair in a speech of which the following is the substance—

Sir,

I SHALL not occupy the time of the house by commenting upon the theories and sentiments of the Honourable Baronet (Sir Francis Burdett), as the judicious arguments of the Honourable Gentleman, who spoke last but one (Mr. Bragge Bathurst), have precluded the necessity of any observations from me upon that subject. I shall therefore proceed as shortly as I can to offer to the house my sentiments upon the disastrous expedition to Walcheren—that monstrous child of presumption and folly—and in order to present to the house a full and clear view of the subject, I shall feel it necessary to take the matter up at an earlier period, and to discuss it upon broader grounds, than the Gentlemen who have preceded me in this debate have thought it expedient to do. In stating this, I beg the house not to be alarmed with the apprehension that I intend to occupy any very material portion of their time. The mode in which I propose to discuss the question, will probably be found to be the most concise that could be adopted; as it frequently happens, according to an old proverb, that "the farthest way about is the nearest way home." I shall attempt to show, not only that this expedition could not possibly succeed, that even success would not have justified the employment of

such a proportion of the national force to the purposes of such an expedition. I am aware, that in supporting the latter proposition, I shall have the popular voice against me; but it has frequently been my lot to contend against the senseless clamours of the populace, and I have not unfrequently had the satisfaction to find that measures which have been proposed by me in direct opposition to popular opinion, have ultimately, by that very opinion, been fully sanctioned. Nothing can be more derogatory from the character of a statesman, than a perpetual hankering after popularity. To a desire of this sort, on the part of His Majesty's ministers, do I attribute this most calamitous expedition, and all the disgrace and ruin which have attended it; and I must say, that if the persons intrusted with the direction of the energies of the kingdom, continue to be actuated by this sentiment, it is not difficult to foresee, that the destruction of the country must be the inevitable consequence.

To demonstrate the folly and impracticability of the plan (if plan it may be called) of this monstrous expedition, it will not be necessary to go into a very minute detail of the mass of evidence which has been laid upon the table. I shall content myself with selecting a few of the more prominent points. In making this selection, I shall have little difficulty; the whole conduct of the expedition is so pregnant with ignorance and folly, and presents such a choice of blunders, that had it been divided amongst ten administrations, it would have been sufficient to condemn them all. The Noble Lord (Castlereagh), however, in defending the conduct of himself and his colleagues upon this melancholy occasion, has expressed himself with a degree of callous indifference, intermixed with pleasantry, which cannot but seem ill-adapted to his situation. For my own part, I could not listen without indignation and horror to the arguments, so full of nothingness, and delivered with so much flippancy, by which that Noble Lord attempted to defend himself for having wantonly consigned thousands of his countrymen to an inglorious grave. His late Right Honourable Colleague (Mr. Canning) has certainly conducted himself with greater propriety. Some part, at least, of his usual presumption seems to have forsaken him; and it unquestionably does now become His Majesty's ministers to be humble—their wings have been damped by the fogs of Walcheren—they are like wasps in rainy weather—we may examine them without fear of their stings.

In discussing the conduct of this miserable expedition, this concatenation of blunders, this long lane of mischiefs which has no turn, except to destruction, the first thing to be observed is, that, according to all their evidence, the planners of the expedition could have no hope of success, unless all the chances turned out

in their favour, unless all their cards turned to be trumps. The wind must blow from a certain point, and it must blow with a certain degree of force;—if the wind changed, the expedition could not arrive at the destined point;—and if the wind blew fresh, it would produce a surf, and prevent the landing. Now, considering the proverbial *certainty* of the wind, the expectation that all these things would happen must be admitted to have been extremely rational; but, supposing that His Majesty's ministers could have had sufficient influence to induce the wind to blow exactly as they wished it, still to insure any thing like a prospect of success to the expedition, this mighty armament must, in all its subsequent operations, have moved with the regularity and precision of a piece of machinery; one operation must be performed in three days, another in four, the artillery must move through the sand without friction, and there must be "no enemy to fight withal." What a pity it is that our sober ministers have not been in the habit of frequenting the gaming table; had they known how to calculate odds, they never would have sent out this expedition. But, Sir, the truth is, that this gallant army, this last hope of England, was committed to imminent hazards and ultimate destruction, without any thing like a plan for the guidance of its operations. The Noble Lord seems to have thought it quite sufficient to send out an expedition, and leave the rest to chance. My Lord Chatham was sent out to try experiments. I remember a story of a man, who, being asked if he could play on the fiddle, said, "he could not tell, but he would try." Such was precisely the situation of my Lord Holland (a loud laugh). I must beg His Lordship's pardon for having substituted his name for that of my Lord Chatham; but His Lordship is always near my heart, and his name has involuntarily slipped from my tongue.

What did the military opinions amount to? Precisely nothing; and how could it be otherwise, seeing that the officers had no *data* whereon to found their opinions? Ministers, indeed, tell us that they had information from their spies, that there were so many men at Antwerp—so many at Lillo—and so many at Bergen-op-Zoom; but it must be recollected that it is the interest of spies to smoothe the difficulties that lie in the way of their employers; and, independently of this consideration, how is it possible for spies to form an estimate of the amount of the small detachments which are scattered all over the country? It must also be recollected, that a great part of the population of the country consists of men who have been accustomed to the use of arms; ay, Sir, and who have seen fire too. The very sweepings of such a country would have been sufficient for the defence of Antwerp. But were ministers so very ignorant, as not to know there are between twenty and thirty fortified towns, within a

few days' march of Antwerp, and that each of those towns has its garrison? Nay, it is now known, that troops were sent even from Paris to Antwerp, before our devoted army reached the point where its difficulties were to commence. Did ministers think that the troops of the enemy were immovable? The insane calculations of these dreamers remind me of a countryman, who, in directing a traveller across the Downs, told him, that he must travel three or four miles, and when he came to a flock of sheep, he must turn to the right. But how if the sheep had changed their position before he got there? What would Gentlemen say of Buonaparte, if, on receiving intelligence from his spies that there were only seven or eight thousand troops in or near Portsmouth, he was to send an expedition of forty thousand men to take the place? Would they not say that he was insane?

The Noble Lord, however, says, that it was intended to take Antwerp by a *coup-de-main*. What must the enemy, Sir, think of us, when they hear this stated? With what contempt and ridicule must they not treat us, when they learn that the projector of this mighty expedition is acquainted with the terms of military science, without having the slightest idea of the meaning of those terms? Good God, Sir, talk of *coup-de-main* with forty thousand men, and thirty-three sail of the line! Gentlemen might as well talk of a *coup-de-main* in the Court of Chancery (loud and continued laughter). I have no wish, Sir, to excite merriment upon this melancholy occasion, but the whole of the conduct of ministers is so pregnant with blunders, so full of ridicule, that it is impossible barely to describe it without producing a laugh.

But the Noble Lord has had the modesty to assert, that the expedition went on very well; that Buonaparte did nothing for the defence of Antwerp; that when our Commanders gave up the enterprise, there were only twenty-six thousand troops in and near Antwerp; and of those troops, the Noble Lord has thought proper to speak in terms of the utmost contempt. What was there in the composition of those troops to induce the Noble Lord to treat them with ridicule? Were they volunteers, or were they local militia? This assertion of the Noble Lord, if it amounts to any thing, amounts to a censure of the officers entrusted with the command of the expedition. The Noble Lord and his colleagues evidently wish to have it inferred that the commanders of the expedition have been to blame. Why, then, do they not plainly tell us so? They point their fingers at the commanders, but they dare not name them. It is fortunate for the country, however, that the commanders were not mad enough to attempt to proceed to Antwerp; calamitous and disgraceful as the result of the expedition has been, our ruin would, in that event, have been still more complete. If it be asked why Buonaparte did not send more

troops to Antwerp, the answer is evident; his troops, though not under the walls of Antwerp, were in situations from whence they could be speedily sent either there or to any other point likely to be attacked by us. The troops then in the garrison were sufficient for present defence; and it, therefore, was not worth his while to send more troops, until he ascertained that our commanders were desperate enough to attempt the siege of the place. He well knew (though our ministers did not) what sort of an enemy our brave army had to contend with, in the pestilential marshes of Walcheren; and much would he rejoice, when he found that ministers had been insane enough to send their armament to the Scheldt. When he first heard that such was the destination of our boasted expedition, with what a smile of satisfaction would he say to his ministers,

————— “there let them lie,
“Till famine and the ague eat them up.”

Upon a consideration, Sir, of all the evidence laid upon your table, I feel myself bound solemnly to call upon this house for the condemnation of those ministers who have wantonly compromised the safety and honour of the country, by undertaking an expedition in which success was absolutely impossible. I shall now, Sir, attempt to show, that even success would not have justified His Majesty's ministers in putting to hazard the last army of the country upon this expedition. The administration, Sir, with whom I had the honour to act, made it their uniform study to husband the resources of the country; regardless of popular clamour, they determined not to expend, in fruitless expeditions, that blood and that treasure, which, at no very distant period, may be required in the defence of all that is dear to us. I am, however, ready to admit, that there may be occasions which call for a departure from the rules of ordinary prudence; the Spanish Revolution was, in my opinion, one of those occasions; and had I been in office when that event occurred, I, for one, would have concurred in the propriety of sending to the Peninsula the largest disposable force which the country could possibly spare. When I first heard that the expedition which was afterwards sent to the Scheldt was in contemplation, I did hope that it was destined to reinforce our gallant army then in Spain. I was at that time in the country, but, before the sailing of the expedition, I came to London, where I heard, from persons upon whose information I could rely, such an account of the state of the public mind, and of the events then passing in the north of Germany, as to induce me to form an opinion, that to send our disposable force there, would be preferable even to sending it to Spain. Schill, and many other enterprising men, had embarked in a cause, in which their lives were

at stake, and had they been supported by a powerful British army, something might have been achieved to avert the sinking destinies of Europe.

The hopes of the continent were turned towards His Majesty's ministers; but, alas! how cruelly were those hopes disappointed! Puffed up with the selfish expectation of obtaining a little momentary popularity, by the capture of a few ships, and the destruction of an arsenal, the King's ministers sent this mighty armament (which might possibly have decided the fate of Europe) upon a predatory expedition. How could the expedition to Antwerp produce a diversion in favour of Austria? If ministers had realised the hope of taking Antwerp, what would our army have done next? Must they not instantly have turned their backs upon the enemy, and got on board their ships as fast as their legs could carry them? Would they not otherwise have been exposed to inevitable destruction? Well might Austria complain, and bitterly complain, of the selfishness and meanness of our conduct.

But ministers say, that they were prevented from sending the expedition to the north of Germany by motives of humanity: their humane minds could not brook the idea of exciting an insurrection among the Germans, lest the insurgents should afterwards be butchered by the French; and this we are told by the very men whose tender mercies were exhibited in the attack upon Copenhagen—that base and infamous expedition, by which the reputation of this country has received a stab, never to be effaced while the records of our history shall exist. But how does it happen, that the tender feelings of our ministers are reserved exclusively for the inhabitants of Germany? Why did not those feelings operate to prevent our own brave soldiers from being consigned to destruction in a charnel-house like Walcheren? Where were those feelings when ministers ordered to be exposed to all the horrors of a bombardment, the inhabitants of Flushing, whom we pretended to have come to deliver from the tyranny of the French? This affectation, this cant of humanity, is truly ridiculous.

The ministers have brought evidence before the house, to prove that if the expedition had been sent upon a service which required protracted operations, they could not have found money to pay the troops—the expedition, therefore, could not be of any use as a diversion in favour of Austria, even if the fate of Austria had not been decided, as it actually was, before the expedition embarked. But ministers, it seems, were determined to send an expedition somewhere; the good folks of Margate and Ramsgate, and the rest of the watering-places, must have something to talk about—the Noble Lord (Castlereagh) must have a trip to the coast to see the raree-show of an embarkation; and, therefore, must the best troops of the country be sent to absolute destruction.

The Noble Lord, however, says, that we must not pass a censure upon him and his colleagues, inasmuch as the expedition he planned has not been tried; the ultimate objects of the expedition, he says, have not been attempted. Really, Sir, this is so wretched a quibble, that I am inclined to suspect that it has originated with the *nisi prius* part of the administration.—The Walcheren Expedition not tried! Am I dreaming, Sir? are we really now discussing the merits of a mighty expedition, which sailed to the Scheldt about eight months ago, and which returned about four months afterwards, defeated, disgraced, and almost annihilated? I cry his Lordship mercy, but I really did suppose somehow or other that the Expedition to Walcheren had been tried. Does His Lordship mean to deny that the whole of the expedition, from the beginning to the end, was under the direction of His Majesty's government? And is that government not liable to be called to account for its total failure?

I have now, Sir, only to observe, that if ministers are not arrested in their career of folly, by the censure of this house, the consequences to the country may be dreadful in the extreme—the responsibility of ministers will be an empty sound—the aspersions which have been thrown upon this house, by persons out of doors, will receive confirmation—and the confidence of the people, (I do not mean the people, in the technical sense of the word, but the sober and thinking part of the nation,) in their representatives, will be lost forever!

The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied to Mr. Windham, and Mr. R. Dundas also defended the expedition, which was censured by Mr. Tierney and Mr. Brougham; after which the house divided on the original Resolutions of Lord Porchester;

For Ministers	275
For the Resolutions	227
Majority for Ministers	<u>48</u>

A second division then took place on the first Resolution of General Craufurd, which was as an amendment to the original resolutions:

Ayes	272
Noes	232
Majority for Ministers	<u>40</u>

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A third division took place on the omission of the word "nor," which was moved by Mr. Canning:

Ayes	275
Noes	224
Majority for ministers	<u>51</u>

The fourth division was on the last Resolution of General Craufurd, declaratory of the approbation of the house in the retention of Walcheren, and consequently approving the conduct of Ministers in that respect;

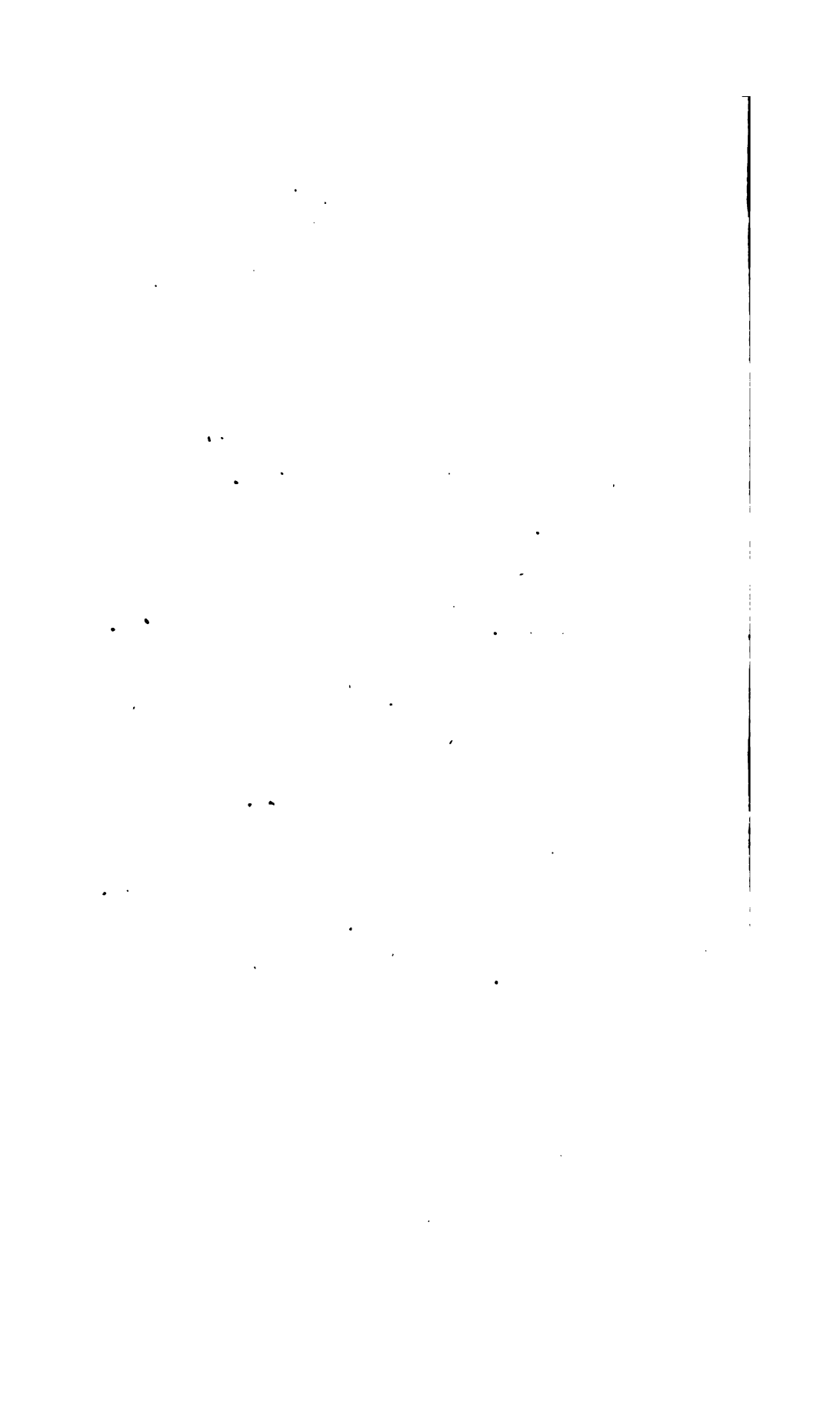
Ayes	255
Noes	232
Majority for Ministers	<u>23</u>

SELECT SPEECHES
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM HUSKISSON:
TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
A BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR.

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BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR

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BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM HUSKISSON.

WILLIAM HUSKISSON was descended from a gentleman's family, of moderate fortune, which had been long settled in Staffordshire. His ancestors for several generations had resided upon their own property, pursuing no profession, and belonged to that class of small landed proprietors—a country gentleman, then so numerous, but which is now become nearly extinct.

His father William was the second son of William Huskisson, Esquire, of Oxley, near Wolverhampton. He married Elizabeth, daughter of John Bellows, Esquire, of an ancient Staffordshire family. On his marriage with this lady, Mr. Huskisson hired the residence called Birch Moreton Court—then belonging to the Earl of Belmont—with an extensive farm attached to it, in the county of Worcester, where the subject of this memoir was born on the 11th of March, 1770.

We may pass briefly and rapidly over the preliminary part of Mr. Huskisson's education. It is sufficient to say, that on his mother's death, being then about five years old, he was placed at an infant school, at Brewood, in Staffordshire; more, as may well be understood, for the purpose of being taken care of than for that of instruction: that he was afterwards removed to Albrighton, and lastly, to Appleby in Leicestershire; where, young as he was, he gave evident promise of those talents by which, in after-life, he acquired for himself such a splendid reputation. It is singular that even then he evinced the peculiar aptitude for figures and calculations which subsequently enabled him in Parliament to give to the most intricate numerical details a clearness

unequalled in the financial expositions of other statesmen, and which (as it has been said) rendered his statements so intelligible as to make those of his auditors least conversant with such subjects believe at least that they understood his plans and comprehended his reasoning.

But whatever might have been the early genius exhibited by Mr. Huskisson, or however promising his talents and abilities at that period, the successful cultivation and developement of them were probably owing, in a great measure, to the watchful care which was afterwards bestowed upon his education by his maternal great-uncle, Dr. Gem.

Dr. Gem was a physician of considerable eminence in his day, and well known and highly esteemed; not more for his professional skill than for his other numerous scientific and literary attainments. When the Duke of Bedford was appointed ambassador to France, at the peace of 1763, Dr. Gem accompanied him as physician to the embassy.

The brilliant society of men of letters in which he constantly mixed, and the facilities which Paris then presented for the pursuit of different branches of science, proved so congenial to his nature, that he determined to fix his residence in that capital and its vicinity; still, however, paying frequent visits to his friends in England, and to a small patrimonial estate which he possessed in Worcestershire. Towards his niece (Mrs. Huskisson) he always entertained a particular affection; and, after her death, continued to take great interest in her children. Their father having contracted a second marriage, Dr. Gem became anxious that the two elder of his nephews should be entrusted to his care. After some hesitation, his wishes were complied with; and they were permitted to accompany their great-uncle on his return to Paris, in 1783.

When this arrangement took place, Mr. Huskisson was in the fourteenth year of his age, and of a disposition calculated to derive the greatest advantages from the guidance and superintendence of a mind like that of Dr. Gem, who presided over his education with unremitting care and scrutinizing attention. Those who recollect having seen them together during the visit which the Doctor annually made with his young charges to England,

describe him as exacting from the boys a strict and diligent application to their studies, and as indefatigable in his efforts to foster and expand the indications of genius, with which their minds were endowed by nature.

The moment at which Dr. Gem first undertook the charge of Mr. Huskisson and his brother, was one full of extraordinary political interest; and of all places in the world, Paris was the one in which this interest would be likely to act the most powerfully upon a youthful and energetic imagination.

On the generous nature of Mr. Huskisson, the stirring events of the times undoubtedly produced a powerful impression; and every year naturally added to his enthusiasm for the success of a cause which enlisted in its favour all the best sympathies of humanity, and which was as yet unsullied by the horrible atrocities which marked its after-course with blood and crime: while the financial discussions, which followed in rapid succession as the difficulties of the times grew more complicated, seized upon the peculiar bent of his understanding, and gave him a turn for the study of political knowledge, which may be said to have decided his future destiny.

Mr. Huskisson was present at the taking and destruction of the Bastille, in July, 1789. At this time, his zeal and enthusiasm for the cause of liberty had reached their zenith. In the course of the following year, he became a member of the Club of 1789, which had been then just established. In spite of the objections which were pointed out, the plan of issuing assignats was adhered to; and Mr. Huskisson then detached himself from all further connexion with the club. He delivered a speech against them, when the anglo-mania was at its height in Paris; and the young Englishman soon found himself an object of general interest and admiration in all the most distinguished liberal circles of that metropolis. His discourse was loudly extolled; his talents became the theme of general conversation; and his society was eagerly courted by people of the highest consideration and fashion of both sexes.

To the favourable opinion of Dr. Warner, Mr. Huskisson was indebted for his first introduction to the present Marquis of Stafford; then Lord Gower, the British Minister at Paris. Struck

with the pleasing manners and promising talents of his youthful countryman, Dr. Warner mentioned him to the ambassador—to whom Dr. Gem was well known, both personally and by reputation—in terms of such high commendation, that an introduction took place, at the particular desire of Lord Gower; and this introduction was shortly followed up by an offer of becoming his private secretary.

This offer Mr. Huskisson accepted, and took up his abode at the ambassador's hotel, some time in the year 1790. On the evening of that dreadful day, (August 10th), when slaughter had stayed its weary arm, and it became possible for a foreigner to venture forth into the streets of Paris, Mr. Huskisson wandered out to view the field of conflict, and to endeavour to obtain some more accurate information of the transactions which had taken place in the last twenty-four hours. The residence of the English ambassador was then at the Hotel de Monaco, in the Fauxbourg St. Germain; where Mr. Huskisson inhabited a suite of rooms on one side of the gate similar to one on the other side, which had been the apartments of the Comte de Valentinois while the Princess de Monaco lived there. When Mr. Huskisson returned to his apartments, he found that during his absence, Monsieur de Champcenez, the then governor of the Tuileries, had taken refuge there. It appeared that this nobleman had, when the palace was assaulted and carried by the infuriated mob, either been thrown, or had jumped from one of the windows, and that he had fallen amongst some of the unfortunate Swiss, whose bodies lay in heaps around the palace which they had so gallantly attempted to defend. After remaining in this perilous situation for some hours, and happily eluding the murderous search of the wretches who were busily engaged in giving the finishing stroke to any of the victims who still breathed, M. de Champcenez had, as the darkness of the evening closed upon this fatal day, contrived, with much difficulty, to make his way unperceived to the hotel of the British ambassador, where, by passing himself for an Englishman, he had obtained access to the apartments of Mr. Huskisson, with whom he was slightly acquainted. Here Mr. Huskisson found him concealed. The situation was one of the utmost delicacy and of the greatest embarrassment. M. de Champcenez threw

himself upon his honour, and appealed to his generosity and humanity to protect him against the assassins. To drive him from his refuge was virtually to become his murderer, and to deliver him up to a fate even more cruel than that from which he had escaped. To allow him to remain was to incur the deepest responsibility—to run the risk of compromising the ambassador, and consequently to hazard the danger of provoking a war between France and England. It was as imperative to keep the knowledge that a person so closely attached to the royal family had taken shelter in the Hotel of the Embassy, from reaching Lord Gower, as it was to prevent the circumstance from being discovered by the blood-thirsty populace. In this dilemma, Mr. Huskisson at last bethought himself of placing his unfortunate guest under the protection of a laundress, on whose fidelity he knew he could confide. He contrived to have him secretly conveyed to her dwelling, furnished him with money and whatever else he required, and, at the expiration of a week of mutual alarm and anxiety, had the happiness of ascertaining that he had quitted Paris in safety. This nobleman died a few years ago, having been restored to the government of the Tuileries by Louis XVIII.

After the catastrophe of the 10th of August, and the deposition of Louis XVI. by the Convention, the British Government recalled its Minister. Mr. Huskisson accompanied Lord Gower and his family to England. On his return to England, he continued to pass the greater part of his time in the family of Lord Gower, either at Wimbledon or in London, where he often met Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas. The Government, about this time, found that it was indispensable to make some arrangement for the creation of an office at which the claims and affairs of the numerous bodies of emigrants who now thronged to take refuge in England, might be heard and discussed. The subject was one day mentioned at a dinner at Lord Gower's, and Mr. Dundas expressed himself very desirous to find some person who, to good abilities and gentlemanly manners, should unite a perfect knowledge of the French language. The fitness of Mr. Huskisson for such a situation was mentioned and admitted: it was tendered to him, and accepted. Dry and unimportant in their details, and oftentimes harsh and unthankful in their nature, as were

necessarily the duties which he had to perform in his new situation, Mr. Huskisson never suffered himself to relax in his attention. To remarkable acuteness and unwearied application, he united a singular facility in comprehending the views of others and clearness in explaining his own. Few persons were ever better qualified to judge of the talents and capacity of those employed under them than Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas; and they were not slow in discovering that in Mr. Huskisson were combined, in an eminent degree, all the requisites towards forming a valuable man of business, and a most efficient public servant. His conduct in his present office justified the opinion they had formed of his abilities, and shortly won their entire confidence; whilst it laid the foundation of a friendship which endured unimpaired to the close of their lives.

About this period, he became acquainted with Mr. Canning, who had been recently returned to Parliament, and who entered into public life under the avowed patronage of Mr. Pitt: and a friendship began, which remained unchanged and unweakened through all the vicissitudes of their remaining years.

The government soon discovered that the powers of Mr. Huskisson's mind were of a character far beyond the sphere in which they had hitherto been employed, and that they demanded a wider and more important range for their useful developement and application. Accordingly, when in the spring of 1795, Mr. Nepeau was appointed secretary to the Admiralty, an arrangement was made by which Mr. Huskisson succeeded his friend as under-secretary of State in the department of War and Colonies, the seals of which were then held by Mr. Dundas.

From this period, Mr. Huskisson may be considered as having finally abandoned himself to the pursuit of politics; and his history, to the close of his life, is more or less prominently connected with that of almost all great public measures.

Living in habits of the strictest friendship and most confidential communication with Mr. Pitt, he was often called to the private councils of that great statesman; while from the many demands upon the time and attention of Mr. Dundas, the executive direction of the War and Colonial Department devolved very much upon the under-secretary.

The archives of that department would afford multiplied and important proofs of the talents and assiduity by which Mr. Huskisson justified the high opinion and flattering preference which had placed him there: but it may be sufficient to mention, as a single instance, that the indefatigable exertions and consummate skill manifested by him in the arrangements and equipment of the expedition which, under the able conduct of Sir Charles (afterwards Lord) Grey, achieved such brilliant exploits in the West Indies, drew from that distinguished officer the warmest encomiums; and he is known ever after to have expressed himself in strong terms of admiration of Mr. Huskisson's services on that occasion.

Towards the close of the year 1796, he was first brought into parliament for the borough of Morpeth, under the patronage of the late Lord Carlisle, who was much attached to him, and who, at that time, supported Mr. Pitt's Government. But, devoted to the laborious and daily increasing duties of his office, he did not allow either his vanity or his ambition to entice him from an undivided attention to them, for the sake of a premature display on a stage where he was destined to gain, in after-times, such splendid triumphs in the cause of liberal and enlightened policy. On the contrary, he appears, by a reference to the parliamentary debates of that period, to have spoken, for the first time, in February, 1798, when he moved,—“that there be laid before the House copies of the correspondence between the Transport Board and the French Government, relative to Captain Sir Sydney Smyth, and in general relative to the exchange of prisoners between the two countries,”—a motion which he introduced by a short speech, in confutation of the calumnies and misrepresentations circulated in France on the treatment of French prisoners in England.

There is nothing extant in the parliamentary history of Mr. Huskisson which would bear the character of what is usually termed a maiden speech.

On the retirement of Mr. Pitt in 1801, Mr. Huskisson, as well as Mr. Canning, resigned his situation. At the request of Lord Hobart, however, who succeeded to the War and Colonial Department, seconded by the solicitations of Mr. Dundas, who was

particularly anxious that the following up of certain measures then in progress, should have the advantage of being conducted to a termination by a person who had been acquainted with his views and intentions, he consented to exercise the functions of under-secretary for a short time, until Lord Hobart should have made himself conversant with the nature and management of his new office. In this arrangement, he acquiesced very reluctantly, and on a distinct understanding that it should be considered as merely temporary. On intelligence being received of the glorious battle of Alexandria, and of the unfortunate death of the gallant Sir Ralph Abercrombie, it became necessary for the government at home to select his successor; and it has been supposed that some difference of opinion arose on this subject. However that may have been, Mr. Huskisson then claimed that the time for his retirement was arrived, and he accordingly withdrew into private life.

In 1799, he married the youngest daughter of Admiral Milbanke, an union in every respect most gratifying to his friends, and which proved to himself a source of unchequered and increasing happiness, till it was torn asunder by the dreadful catastrophe which has left her no other worldly consolation than the remembrance of the virtues which adorned him, and that which may be gathered from the universal sympathy of the world, which deplores and participates in her loss.

There are some persons who are recorded never to have gone into action without being wounded. Mr. Huskisson seems to have laboured under a similar fatality in regard to accidents, from his earliest infancy to that fatal one which closed his career.

As a child, he fractured his arm: a few days before his marriage, his horse fell with him, and he was severely hurt: soon after he was knocked down by the pole of a carriage, just at the entrance to the Horse Guards: in the autumn of 1801, being then in Scotland, at the Duke of Athol's, he missed his distance in attempting to leap the moat, and gave himself a most violent sprain of the ankle, accompanied with a considerable laceration of some of the tendons and ligaments of his foot; and it was many weeks before he recovered sufficiently to leave Scotland. Indeed, the effects of this accident were visible in his gait during the

remainder of his life. He afterwards fractured his arm by a fall from his horse at Petworth; and again in 1817, by his carriage being overturned. On this occasion, none of his surgeons could discover the precise nature of the mischief; but Sir Astley Cooper was of opinion that the bone was split from the fracture up to the joint. The recovery was slow, and his sufferings very severe; as all kinds of experiments were employed to prevent the joint from stiffening. In spite of every exertion, he never recovered the full use of his arm; and a visible alteration in the spirit and elasticity of his carriage resulted from the injury. He was constantly encountering accidents of minor importance; and the frequency of them, joined to a frame enfeebled from the severe illnesses under which he suffered during his latter years, had given rise to a certain hesitation in his movements whenever any crowd or obstacle impeded him, which may, perhaps, in some degree, have led to that last misfortune which, to his friends and to the country, may be deemed irreparable.

At the general election in 1802, he offered himself as a candidate for Dover; but, though supported by the good wishes and influence of his Lord Warden, he was defeated by Mr. Spencer Smyth, the government candidate, whose brother, Sir Sydney, got possession of the church (in which the election was then held) with his boat's crew, and effectually blockaded all approach to the voters in the opposite interest. After this defeat, he did not come into parliament till 1804. In the month of February, in that year, a vacancy occurred in the representation of Liskeard, Mr. Elliot, the sitting member, having succeeded to the peerage, on the death of his elder brother, Lord Elliot. Mr. Huskisson was induced to offer himself, and was opposed by Mr. Thomas Sheridan. Owing to some mismanagement in forwarding the writ, the contest proved more severe than had been anticipated, and a double return was made. A petition was presented by Mr. Huskisson, which had to pass through three committees before a final decision was obtained in his favour. During the interval, Mr. Addington had been driven from the helm by the united attacks of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, and an attempt was made to give to the country a powerful and efficient ministry, which should embrace the friends of both those great statesmen. But difficul-

ties arising which were deemed insurmountable, Mr. Pitt undertook to form an administration, excluding as well Mr. Fox and the Whigs as Lord Grenville and his adherents. Under this arrangement, Mr. Huskisson was appointed one of the secretaries of the Treasury.

The second administration of Mr. Pitt was clouded abroad by the disastrous overthrow of the third coalition, whilst at home the impeachment of Lord Melville, and his own declining strength, cast a shade of weakness and discomfiture over his government, in strong and mortifying contrast with the days of his former power. The glories of Trafalgar indeed outshone the disgrace of Ulm, and cast a bright, but expiring halo round the last days of the statesman: but on his death, in January, 1806, the feeble remains of the cabinet gave way before the mere anticipation of the formidable phalanx opposed to them, and "all the talents" assumed the reins of government.

Mr. Huskisson now became an active member of the opposition, and showed himself a shrewd and vigilant observer of the proceedings of Ministers. His attention was particularly directed to their financial measures; and in the month of July, he moved a string of resolutions relating to public accounts, which were approved of and agreed to by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Henry Petty.

Parliament having been dissolved in the autumn of this year, Mr. Huskisson was again returned from Liskeard.

On the formation of the Duke of Portland's Government in the April following, he resumed his situation as Secretary of the Treasury; and the new administration having deemed it advisable to appeal to the sense of the country, and to call a fresh parliament, he became member for Harwich, which place he continued to represent till the general election in 1812. In the long debates which took place respecting the charges brought against the Duke of York as Commander-in-Chief, he bore little or no share; but when Colonel Wardle, a day or two before the close of the session of 1809, came forward with a sweeping motion relative to public economy, Mr. Huskisson appears, for the first time, as a principal in an important general debate, and on a subject embracing the widest field for discussion. The deep

attention with which his reply to Colonel Wardle was heard, demonstrated at once the intrinsic merits of the speech, and the high rank to which the speaker had won his way in the estimation of the House. On the retirement of Mr. Canning, Mr. Huskisson steadily resisted the earnest entreaties of Mr. Percival to continue in the government; and rejecting, without a moment's hesitation, all the flattering offers which were made to him, followed the fortunes of his friend. In the session of 1810, Mr. Huskisson's parliamentary exertions were principally limited to some strong observations on the army estimates, in which he strenuously argued the necessity of economy, and of any practicable reduction; points which he again pressed on the consideration of government in the discussions which ensued on the budget. This conduct drew down some sharp comments from Mr. Whitbread, who, after complimenting his abilities, and regretting the loss which the public had sustained by the manner in which "his place was then occupied rather than supplied," reproached him for the inconsistency of his present language with that which he had held while in office the preceding year—a reproach which Mr. Huskisson ably repelled, and which he would probably have altogether escaped, at least from that quarter, had he not, with Mr. Canning, declined to join in a general opposition to the measures of a government of which they had so recently formed a part.

But the most important event, as relating to the fame and character of Mr. Huskisson, which occurred in the course of this year, was the appearance of his pamphlet on the Currency System; in which he displayed the most consummate knowledge of this complicated and much dissected subject, in all its various bearings—the soundest and most enlightened views, and the most prophetic insight into the dangers and difficulties which must ensue from a long and obstinate perseverance in the existing method of managing the financial resources of the country. This publication was eminently successful, and confirmed to him the reputation of being the first financier of the age. The apparent ease and rapidity with which this elaborate performance was composed, still live in the memory of some of those who happened to be at Eartham when it was written, as well as the

unaffected manner with which he would join the party in the morning, and submit to their remarks the successive sheets which he had prepared since they had separated on the preceding night. In the debates on Mr. Percival's Regency Bill, Mr. Huskisson adopted the same policy and the same line of conduct as that pursued by Mr. Canning, and contented himself with stating his opinions once in the course of the discussions.

It was in the progress of this session, also, that the celebrated debate took place upon Mr. Horner's Resolutions on the Report of the Bullion Committee. Mr. Huskisson rose to reply to Mr. Vansittart, who had called upon him to answer "in what sense the term depreciation, as used by the Committee was to be understood;" an answer to which was returned, as Mr. Canning afterwards remarked, "in one sense, at least, to the complete satisfaction of him who had asked for it." Mr. Huskisson's speech was distinguished by the force and perspicuity of its arguments, and by the soundness of its principles; and it was evident that he was dealing with a subject of which he was completely master. Upon the dissolution of parliament in the autumn of this year, he received an invitation from many of the most respectable inhabitants of Chichester to succeed Mr. Thomas (who had signified his intention of retiring) as representative for that city, on what is there called the Blue or Independent interest. Nothing could be more gratifying than this invitation—nothing more flattering than the reception which he met with, both on his canvas and at the hustings, where he was returned without opposition. Parliament assembled in November, when Mr. Huskisson once more exposed and controverted the notorious resolution of Mr. Vansittart, declaring that a pound-note and a shilling were equivalent to a guinea; which the latter pertinaciously maintained in the face of the flagrant proofs to the contrary which daily occurred. In the month of March following, he took a luminous and scrutinizing view of the finances of the country, and of the resolutions proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and stated the nature of the alterations which he wished to see introduced. For this speech, he received the highest compliments from Mr. Baring, Mr. Henry Thornton, Mr. Tierney, and other members of the House, most conversant with the subject. It is full of those

peculiar excellencies which mark all what (in order to avoid periphrasis) may be familiarly termed the professional speeches of Mr. Huskisson.

When the question of the existing Corn Laws was brought under the notice of the House, in this session, he distinguished himself in the debate which arose upon certain resolutions moved by Sir Henry Parnell; and it was on this occasion, that he first proposed a scale of graduated prohibitory duties, which, in after-years, gave rise to so much discussion, when they had been matured by the wisdom and experience of Lord Liverpool.

It is worthy, too, of remark that, even at this period, Mr. Huskisson objected to the propositions of Sir Henry Parnell, "as proceeding too much on the principle of giving the monopoly of the English market to the English corn-grower."

In August, Mr. Huskisson succeeded Lord Glenbervie as Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests, and was sworn of the Privy Council.

Notwithstanding a partial clamour which was raised about the Corn Laws, his re-election at Chichester met with no opposition; for a more intimate intercourse with his constituents had only increased the attachment and confidence which they felt towards him. The new office in which he was placed afforded him an opportunity of showing to the world the versatility of his talents, and the facility with which his comprehensive genius could apply itself, and descend to any subject. The improvement of the Crown Forests became the great object of his care. He obtained an accurate insight into the best methods of planting and managing them, and made himself conversant with the nature of the different soils—the particular description of trees to which they were best adapted—the various treatment which the plants demanded in different situations, and at different periods; and with the growth and quality of the timber. All this he did with a readiness and a discrimination which astonished, as much as it gratified the old and experienced officers of the different forests; whose duty it was to accompany him on his rounds during his annual visits of inspection to their respective stations. It is no exaggeration to say, that they may still be heard to dwell with admiration on the interest which he took, and the unusual know-

ledge which he evinced, in the direction of this department; and that they will even now speak with regret of the natural kindness and unaffected simplicity of his habits.

In the course of 1815, the subject of the Corn Laws, which had been partially discussed, and then postponed in the preceding year, was brought forward by the government; and long debates arose on the policy of making such alterations as might be necessary to adapt them to the demands and exigencies of the present times.

Although the question was one beset with difficulties, and which had the double disadvantage of exposing those who came to the arrangement of it with fair and moderate views, at once to the blind fury of the populace, and to the unforgiving jealousy of the landed interest, whose mutual disappointment in their equally unreasonable expectations found a single point of agreement in a cordial hatred of the supporters of a middle course; and although he was not called upon, from his official situation, to draw down on himself this mass of unpopularity, Mr. Huskisson nevertheless took a prominent part in these discussions. He seems, indeed, to have taken extraordinary pleasure in grappling with subjects of this arduous and complicated kind, and to have found in them something congenial to his nature. Diffident of his own powers, and free from anything like a feeling of rivalry or jealousy, he should seem to have systematically relinquished all topics, whether foreign or domestic, which demanded or allowed the use or display of the more dazzling graces of public speaking, to the splendid eloquence of Mr. Canning. It is certain, at least, that during the life of that great man, he seldom if ever mixed in the discussions on foreign policy, however tempting the occasion; and that, although invariably favourable to the abolition of the slave trade, and to the claims of the Roman Catholics, he generally limited his support of them, with the exception of a speech in favour of the latter, in 1825, to a silent vote. The Corn Laws were not the only difficult question of domestic policy which occupied the attention of government in 1815 and 1816. The Bank Restriction, which had been continued until July in the latter year, was brought under the consideration of parliament in the month of May, when Mr. Horner moved

“that a Select Committee should be appointed for inquiring into the expediency of restoring the Cash Payments of the Bank of England, and the safest and most advantageous means of effecting such restoration.” In the debate which ensued, Mr. Huskisson declared, that he still retained the opinions which he had formerly expressed when the Bullion Committee had terminated its labours. No inquiry, he said, was necessary on the first point embraced by the motion. All agreed that there was no security for property, no stability in public credit, no confidence in trade, no mode of adjusting the rights, and consulting the interests of all classes of society, without a circulation rendered steady by possessing a permanent and universal value; but he thought that the task of restoring the precious metals should be left to the discretion of the Bank, with a declaration that parliament expected the resumption of Cash Payments should not be delayed beyond two years: and a clause declaratory of such an expectation was accordingly adopted. The truth appears to have been, that in the interval since the former discussions on this subject, the Bank had not only neglected preparations for resuming their payments in cash, but had actually extended their issues; so that the government found itself compelled to prolong the restriction till July, 1818. Mr. Huskisson took every opportunity of expressing the satisfaction with which he looked forward to the arrival of the period fixed for the resumption of cash payments, and his sanguine hope that it would not be delayed beyond the time contemplated by parliament. His penetration, however, was at no loss to discover, and his candour did not allow him to disguise, that the interval which must elapse between the withdrawing or absorbing of a large portion of the excessive circulation of the country, and the return to another state of currency, must be a time of severe pressure, not only in Great Britain, but all over Europe.

To this period, when the state of the currency and the country banks was to be placed on a more secure footing, he again alluded, when arguing in favour of the set of Finance Resolutions moved by Mr. Charles Grant, and carried in opposition to those of Mr. Tierney, at the close of the session of 1817; and he expressed his earnest hope that every thing would be done to pre-

pare the country for the reception of more liberal commercial arrangements, in order to afford some counterpoise to the pressure which he foresaw impending, and to disarm the jealousy of foreign countries.

In the debate which followed Lord Althorp's attempt in 1818, for a repeal of the Leather Tax, which was defeated by a very small majority, we find Mr. Huskisson opposing the bill, and enforcing his opposition on the ground, that no tax could be repealed with full benefit to the public except direct taxes, and that if any reduction could possibly be made, these ought to be the first to attract consideration.

When, in this year, Mr. Tierney moved a resolution involving the much agitated question of an immediate resumption of cash payments, Mr. Huskisson successfully advocated a further delay. He showed that such a measure was then incompatible with the existing state of affairs, and that the House could do nothing more than declare the time for resuming such payments, leaving the care of providing the necessary means to the Bank itself.

But while he maintained that the present was not the season for removing the restriction, he avowed that a difference existed between him and the Chancellor of the Exchequer on certain points. This led him to defend and eulogize the Report made by the Bullion Committee, which he characterized as containing a perspicuous statement of facts and well-connected inferences still unanswered; and he expressed his regret that the distinguished individual who had prepared it (Mr. Horner) was not living, to assist the present deliberations with the force of his reasoning, and the accuracy of his judgment. In the autumn of this year, parliament was dissolved, and Mr. Huskisson re-elected for Chichester without any opposition.

On the appointment of the Finance Committee, at the commencement of the session of 1819, Mr. Huskisson's abilities, and his knowledge of all the intricacies of the subject, were too conspicuous not to ensure his name being included in the list; and it has been supposed, that the influence which his great talents and intimate acquaintance with finance secured to him, proved of the utmost importance to Ministers in surmounting the difficulties which opposed them.

The masterly exposition which he made when the Chancellor of the Exchequer (the present Lord Bexley) brought forward his string of resolutions relating to public income and expenditure, as founded upon the report of that committee, probably saved the government upon that occasion: or, should this be thought too bold an assertion, certainly contributed very essentially to mitigate the opposition which they encountered. It has been said, that Mr. Huskisson gave a financial view of each European exchequer, and detailed the various measures then in progress among the different continental states, with an ease and fidelity which excited general surprise and admiration.

Without disguising the difficulties of the case, or attempting to mystify or delude the country with vague calculations, he drew from those very embarrassments fresh arguments for that economy and exertion which alone could ultimately enable the nation to weather them. The death of George the Third having rendered it necessary to summon a new parliament, Mr. Huskisson was again returned for Chichester, with the same marks of attachment and approbation which had been bestowed upon him on the three preceding occasions. In the course of this year, agricultural distress again occupied much of the attention of the House; and a committee was appointed, on the motion of Mr. Holme Summer, to consider the various petitions connected with this subject: but an instruction was afterwards moved and carried by Mr. Robinson, confining the inquiry to the mode of ascertaining, returning, and calculating the average prices of corn in the twelve maritime districts, under the provisions of the existing Corn Laws, and to any frauds which might be committed in violation of any of the provisions of the said laws; which restriction, of course, rendered the labours of this committee of comparatively little importance. In the following year, Ministers having withdrawn their opposition to such a measure, a committee was appointed, on the motion of Mr. Gooch, for a more extended inquiry.

Of this committee, Mr. Huskisson was the most active ministerial member; and the long and elaborate report which was the result of their labours, has been understood to have emanated principally from him. It has been often supposed, too, that in

the prominent part which he took in this committee, and in the steadiness with which he urged or defended a more liberal system in respect to the Corn Laws, may be discovered the explanation of that mingled feeling of suspicion and fear with which that party which denominates itself the Landed Interest, subsequently appears to have watched all his measures. When towards the end of this year, Mr. Canning, from circumstances and considerations wholly distinct from general policy, and indeed, purely personal, retired from the administration, Mr. Huskisson did not follow his example; not from any attachment to his own office, but because he saw that to resign at that moment, would have been to act most unfairly by Mr. Canning, in giving to his retirement a character which did not belong to it, and might prove embarrassing to the government. Although not a member of the Cabinet, and consequently, not involved in whatever responsibility attached to the proceedings of the Ministers against the Queen, Mr. Huskisson did not fear to incur his share of the unpopularity which those proceedings had entailed upon them, nor did he shrink from their defence when, early in the session of 1821, Lord Tavistock moved a resolution strongly condemnatory of their conduct: he however declared, that he had deprecated the inquiry from the outset; feeling that the result of it must be to lower the tone of moral and religious feeling in the country; but that to assent now to the motion of the noble Lord, would be to declare that, in the eyes of the Commons of England, her Majesty had been, if not praise-worthy, at least blameless.

Upon this occasion, he prefaced his speech by stating his reasons for breaking through the practice which he had observed during a long parliamentary life, of declining questions of this general nature, and commented largely upon this difficult and delicate subject. In the progress of the session, the government encountered much opposition, and was exposed to several severe shocks from the united attacks of the old Whig party, strengthened by the Country interest. Several proposals were made to repeal various taxes which pressed heavily upon the country and the House; and Window Duties were the first selected. Their repeal was resisted by the government: but Mr.

Huskisson, while he argued against it, admitted, in pointed terms, the propriety of further economy in preparing the estimates, if it could be shown where further economy was practicable. Notwithstanding this conciliatory admission, and in spite of all the efforts of government, the resolution was lost, only by a majority of 26. Another and more successful attack was then made, and Ministers were outvoted in an endeavour to continue the additional duties upon malt—a defeat which they retaliated a few nights after, when they succeeded in throwing out the bill for their repeal by a large majority. But in June, they were once more in a minority respecting the duties on horses employed in husbandry; which was repealed by a bill brought in by Mr. Curwen. On all these occasions, Mr. Huskisson spoke forcibly against these proposals; and, as they were considered to be more especially calculated for the relief of the Agricultural interest, and were introduced and advocated by those who regarded themselves as more peculiarly the representatives of that body, this active opposition, perhaps, may be thought to have contributed to indispose that powerful party still further towards the principles and policy of Mr. Huskisson. The debates on the distress which pressed heavily upon the Agricultural interest, and which, in its consequences, affected the whole country, were renewed shortly after the re-assembling of parliament, in February, 1822, when Lord Londonderry moved the revival of the committee of the preceding year, and gave notice that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would, without loss of time, bring forward a proposal for enabling the Bank to issue five millions of Exchequer Bills, in loans to different parishes, and also a reduction of the Malt Tax.

In the debate which followed upon the notice of the noble Marquis, Mr. Huskisson's speech must be deemed one of the most important; embracing, as it does, a variety of those topics with which he was, perhaps, more conversant than any other statesman of his time. In consequence of what passed on this occasion, and subsequently on the motion for the appointment of the committee, it became necessary for him to explain the part which he had taken in preparing the Agricultural Report of the preceding year. Having done so, and vindicated himself from the

charge of having mystified the members of that committee, he signified his intention to abstain from all attendance at the present one; in which determination Lord Londonderry declared that he regarded him as perfectly justified. On the 1st of April, the new committee made their report; and on the 29th, Lord Londonderry proposed a string of resolutions declaratory of the views which he, as the leading minister of the Crown in the House of Commons, entertained for the purposes of relief.

These having been read, Mr. Ricardo brought forward another set; and, late in the debate, Mr. Huskisson laid before the House those which he had prepared on the same subject; giving notice, at the same time, that it was his intention, on the next discussion, to state the cause of the difference which would appear between his resolutions and those of the noble Marquis. On the 6th of May, Lord Londonderry moved his first and most important resolution: it was combated by Mr. Huskisson; and, after a short debate, withdrawn. He now felt that, having as an official servant of the Crown opposed, and successfully opposed, a proposition brought forward by the leading member of government in the House of Commons, it was due to the chief of that government to place his office at his disposal.

Accordingly, he waited upon Lord Liverpool; and, after explaining to him what had passed, did that which he afterwards, in 1828, repeated in respect to the Duke of Wellington—namely, placed in his hands the decision whether the penalty of such an act of insubordination was to be enforced against him.

The result, as all the world knows, was as different as the other circumstances of the case were similar; except, indeed, that Mr. Huskisson's conduct, in 1822, was marked with a character of official independence, or rather mutiny, infinitely stronger than anything which arose on the case of the East Retford Disfranchisement Bill. Connected with this topic of agricultural distress, was the motion brought forward by Mr. Western in the month of June, for a committee to consider of the effects which had been produced by the act for the resumption of cash payments.

Mr. Huskisson undertook to reply to Mr. Western; and, after a speech of singular power and effect—a speech which may be

ranked among those of the first class for soundness of political principle and conclusive reasoning—moved, as an amendment, the substitution of the famous resolution of 1696:—"that this House will not alter the standard of gold or silver in fineness, weight, or denomination;"—an amendment which was carried by an overwhelming majority. The death of Lord Londonderry, in the summer of 1822, and Mr. Canning's succession to his office, though they caused no immediate alteration in Mr. Huskisson's official appointments, could not but give a great additional weight to the influence which he before possessed. Negotiations, indeed, were shortly after set on foot for a partial change in the administration; and, at the end of January, 1823, Mr. Vansittart was raised to the peerage, and became Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Mr. Robinson succeeded him at the Exchequer; and Mr. Huskisson was appointed President of the Board of Trade and Treasurer of the Navy. As the offer had been at first unaccompanied with a seat in the Cabinet (which had been attached to these offices while held by Mr. Robinson) some demur arose on the part of Mr. Huskisson, which was only overcome by an assurance that the sole obstacle to his immediate admission was not any objection to him individually, but the extreme inconvenience to public business, resulting from too great an extension of the Cabinet; and by a positive promise that the earliest possible opportunity should be seized to make an opening for him. On this assurance, he agreed to waive, or rather to suspend, his objection; and early in the following autumn, a vacancy was made in the Cabinet, to which he was immediately called. This difficulty having been surmounted, another arose, of a nature particularly delicate and distressing to Mr. Huskisson—the representation of Liverpool. Mr. Canning found that the laborious duties which devolved upon him as one of the members for that important place, superadded to the direction of the Foreign Office and to the lead of the House of Commons, were more than he could adequately discharge; and it was his earnest wish to retire from the representation.

The government felt a strong and natural anxiety that the second great commercial port of the empire should continue to be represented by one of their friends; and Mr. Huskisson was

supposed to be the only person likely to unite the suffrages of all parties. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Lord Liverpool and Mr. Canning should have made a point of his acquiescing in the only arrangement which seemed likely to give general satisfaction. As soon as it was understood that Mr. Huskisson had resolved to retire from Chichester, a requisition was forwarded to him from Liverpool, bearing upwards of a thousand signatures. The election commenced on the 14th of February, and finished on the following day, after a mock contest, in which Lord Molyneux, who declined appearing, polled twenty-three votes, and Dr. Crompton not one. Some preliminary steps had been already taken by Mr. Robinson and Mr. Wallace for relaxing the restrictions which had formerly embarrassed trade, and several new laws affecting it had been proposed by the government in the session of 1822. On Mr. Huskisson's appointment, he immediately proceeded firmly, but cautiously, to take steps towards further and more important alterations. In these, he found himself opposed and thwarted by the prejudices of an active and powerful party, who viewed all innovations with a jealous and unfriendly eye; and the fate of the first bill for regulating the Silk Manufacture, was an evident proof of the obstacles which he would have to encounter before his measures could be crowned with success. This bill, after it had passed the lower House, was returned from the Lords, so changed and mutilated, that Mr. Huskisson preferred abandoning it for the session, rather than to adopt the amendments. In the following year, he was more successful; and the bill passed into a law without encountering any very formidable opposition. In the course of this session, Mr. Huskisson introduced other measures connected with the trade and manufactures of the country:—the Merchant Vessels' Apprenticeship Bill, and that for removing the various vexatious regulations with which the manufacture of Scotch Linen had hitherto been shackled, and its prosperity impeded. He also brought forward the Registry Bill, which had been prepared in the preceding year, but which he had found still lying at the Board of Trade, when he succeeded to that office.

This bill was a consolidation of all the existing laws on the subject, with many improvements; and had been much called for

by every one connected with the Shipping interests of the country. It was a subject very complicated in its details, and difficult to understand: but Mr. Huskisson felt its importance, and lost no time in making himself master of, and bringing it before parliament; and, after some protracted delays in the House of Lords, which drew from him a firm, but temperate remonstrance, these bills ultimately passed before the close of the session.

In 1825, another most important undertaking was completed,—the general revision of the Revenue Laws. This was a task of great magnitude and extraordinary labour; and one which, as Mr. Huskisson frequently declared, could never have been achieved but for the able assistance and unwearied diligence of Mr. James Dearon Hume, then of the Customs, and now of the Board of Trade.

In this year, Mr. Huskisson spoke, for the first time, at any length, in favour of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill. Could he then have anticipated the fate of that question a few years later, how well and pointedly might he have remarked, as he had done in reference to the Commercial concessions which had been, at different intervals, granted to Ireland, that if parliament rejected the bill before them, the time would come when state necessity, acting under a sense of political danger, must yield, without grace, that which good sense and good feeling had before recommended in vain. It is surely impossible for language to portray more faithfully the ultimate settlement of the Catholic question.

It was in June, in this year, that on the third reading of the Bill of Principal and Factor, (a measure for defending and amending which had been carried by him through the House of Commons, in the preceding year, but had failed in the Lords), Mr. Huskisson particularly distinguished himself in a speech of which, unfortunately, not an outline exists. The House had been occupied all night with the case of Mr. Kenrick and Confor, the butcher; and the debate on the Law of Merchant and Factor did not come on till very late. Mr. Scarlett made a long and learned speech against the measure. His arguments were combated by Mr. Huskisson, who, in a speech of an hour and a half, gave his entire view of the commercial policy of Great

Britain, as the natural depôt of the merchandise passing between the new and the old world, and urged the necessity of affording all possible security to advances on goods ware-housed, in order to make it so.

There are many and great authorities now living, who pronounced that he did this in a way in which nobody else could have done it. Owing, however, to the lateness of the hour at which he rose, this elaborate speech was dispatched by the reporters in a few lines; while an admirable one, delivered by Mr. Baring, on the same subject, was left wholly unreported.

Besides the other weighty and laborious questions which occupied Mr. Huskisson, both in his official and parliamentary character, in 1825 and 1826, must be enumerated the complicated and delicate discussions with Mr. Rush,—afterwards continued with Mr. Gallatin, on the various points in dispute between Great Britain and the United States of America:—comprising the adjustment of the North-Western Boundary and that of the Province of New Brunswick—the navigation of the river St. Lawrence—the more effectual suppression of the African Slave Trade, and the intercourse with the West India Colonies. In the negotiations with the American Ministers, Mr. Huskisson was at first assisted by Mr. Stratford Canning, and subsequently, by Mr. Addington. The protocols of those conferences were by them drawn up, and then submitted to Mr. Canning for his final revision and sanction.

Superior to the pressure of the times, and disdaining to attribute it to false causes, the Merchants of Liverpool, with that spirit of liberality, which so nobly characterizes them, came forward to testify their sense of the advantages which had been derived from the alterations already carried into effect, and to mark their approbation of those yet in progress: and, early in 1826, Mr. Huskisson received the following letter, which is too honourable to him, in his public capacity, and to those from whom it proceeded, not to demand an insertion here. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the Service of Plate to which it alludes, was worthy of the greatness of Liverpool, both in taste and magnificence:—

Liverpool, 4th February, 1826.

My dear Sir,

As chairman of the Committee, I have now the honour to request your acceptance of the Service of Plate presented to you by this great commercial town. The motives which led to this proof of public feeling, are set forth in the following inscription, and are also engraved on the centre ornament of the service, viz :—

THE SERVICE OF PLATE,
OF WHICH THIS CANDELABRA IS A PART,
WAS PRESENTED TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM HUSKISSON,
BY A NUMEROUS BODY OF THE
MERCHANTS, FREEMEN, AND INHABITANTS
OF LIVERPOOL;
AS A TESTIMONY
OF THEIR SENSE OF THE BENEFITS
DERIVED TO THE NATION AT LARGE
FROM
THE ENLIGHTENED SYSTEM OF COMMERCIAL POLICY,
BROUGHT FORWARD BY HIM,
AS PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE :
AND OF THEIR GRATITUDE
FOR THE ZEAL AND ABILITY, WITH WHICH,
AS MEMBER FOR LIVERPOOL,
HE HAS WATCHED OVER THE INTERESTS OF
HIS CONSTITUENTS.
1825.

Notwithstanding the embarrassment and distress which generally prevail in trade and manufacture, I am desired by the Committee to assure you, that their conviction of the wisdom of the measures introduced by you for the removal of Commercial Restrictions remains undiminished; and that they confidently anticipate, from their matured operation, the most beneficial effects to the country at large. It is very gratifying to me to have been selected, by my liberal fellow-townsmen, as their organ on this occasion; and I have only to add, that I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

JOHN BOLTON.

To this, Mr. Huskisson made a suitable reply.

Parliament met on the 2d of February, 1826, and the recent embarrassments and distress became the subject of immediate debate.

In the various discussions which ensued upon the Bank Charter and Promissory Notes Acts, Mr. Huskisson, as might be expected, took a prominent part; and, in answer to the abuse which

was now scattered with no unsparing hand against the measures of which he was considered the great champion and adviser, referred, for the solution of the calamitous state of domestic affairs, to the ineffectual warnings which he had given in the preceding year, while he challenged the most searching inquiry into the share which it was asserted the changes in the restrictive system had had in producing the convulsion which terminated in the ruin of so many. It was not long before he had an opportunity of defending himself upon one of his own measures. On the 24th of February, the Silk Question was selected as the object of attack, and Mr. Ellice moved for a committee to consider of the petition, from persons connected with that trade. The speech he delivered on that occasion, drew forth the following note from Mr. Canning :

F. O. 24th February, 1826. 2, A. M.

My dear Mrs. Huskisson,

Having written to the king, I cannot reconcile it to my sense of duty to go to bed without writing to you, to congratulate you on Huskisson's exhibition of to-night. I do assure you, without the smallest compliment or exaggeration, that he has made one of the very best speeches that I ever heard in the House of Commons—a speech decisive, forever, of his character and reputation as a statesman and an orator. It was of the *very first rate* ; and as such, I wish you joy of it with all my heart.

Most sincerely yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

The advocates of the new system never enjoyed a more glorious triumph than on this night. Never was there a more powerful or more unanswerable defence of that system than may be found in the reply made by Mr. Huskisson to the speeches of Mr. Ellice and Mr. Williams. Never was a more generous or more statesman-like support afforded to a colleague than the magnificent display of eloquence with which Mr. Canning eulogized his friend, and overwhelmed his persecutors. The disadvantages of the existing Corn Laws had become so apparent, and a fresh revision of them had been so strongly pressed upon government, in the last session of parliament, that Mr. Huskisson had been induced to give an implied promise to bring the whole subject under the consideration of the House, in the course of the

session of 1826. At the time when this engagement was supposed to have been incurred, it was understood that a dissolution would take place in the course of the following autumn. Contrary to expectation, this dissolution did not take place; and Mr. Huskisson naturally relinquished his intention. Indeed, Ministers announced, on the very first day of the session, their determination not to propose any change in the existing laws, during the present year, as they were unwilling to bring forward so important a subject in the then agitated condition of the country; and were still more indisposed to submit a question of such extreme intricacy and delicacy to be discussed by an expiring parliament, where it was impossible to hope it could be examined with that calm and unprejudiced consideration which it so peculiarly claimed. The subject being thus declined by government, was introduced by Mr. Whitmore, in a formal motion, "for a Committee, to inquire into the state of the Corn Laws;" and several times afterwards became matter of discussion. On all these occasions, though advocating the necessity of delay, Mr. Huskisson did not disguise his opinion, that the system hitherto pursued was an erroneous one—that the change which, during two years of peace, had been operating both internally and externally, required a corresponding change in legislation on this subject, or his hopes that he might see a free trade in corn established under *proper* and *due protection*. The business was ultimately postponed to the following year, with a full understanding that Ministers should be then prepared to bring forward a new-modelling of these laws on their own responsibility.

Parliamentary history presents scarce a parallel to the effect which Mr. Huskisson was accustomed to produce, when he brought forward or vindicated those great plans of Commercial Reform, which mainly depended upon him. He may be said, indeed, to have formed a new era in parliamentary speaking, and to have raised his department to a consequence before unknown. Subjects which, from whatever cause, had hitherto failed in attracting that general attention which their importance might have justly demanded, were now listened to with the deepest interest; and his speeches, minute and unadorned as they were, on the

unpromising topics of Silk and Shipping, raised an admiration and interest equal to those which attended the most eloquent expositions of his colleagues on Foreign Policy, or the Financial Statements which, year after year, announced to the public successive reductions of taxation.

Nor was the effect produced by these speeches confined to this country alone. They were translated into French, at Paris; and he received from France, Germany, and the United States of America, frequent congratulations on his convincing justification of the new system, and warm encouragement to pursue a course which, in its consequences, tended to the general advantage, not only of his countrymen, but of the whole civilized world.

The parliament was dissolved in June, 1826; and Mr. Huskisson was re-elected for Liverpool, after a miserable effort to raise an opposition, under the pretext that the liberal policy of the government in respect to the relaxation of the Commercial System, had injured the native manufactures and trade of the country. No candidate could however be found, and the attempt fell to the ground.

The close attention with which Mr. Huskisson had applied himself to public business during the last two years, and the deep anxiety which he naturally felt for the accomplishment and success of his new measures, had visibly shaken a constitution already impaired by the excitement he had undergone in the winter of 1822. His spirits, too, had certainly suffered; for, however philosophically he outwardly bore himself against the calumnies with which he was assailed, those who saw and watched him, in his hours of retirement, could perceive that the shaft had been shot not altogether in vain, and that his generous nature sometimes sank under the reiterated attacks of his persecutors; who pursued him, as Mr. Canning expressed it, "in the same doctrine and spirit which embittered the life of Turgot, and consigned Galileo to the dungeons of the Inquisition."

The year 1827, so fruitful in melancholy occurrences, was ushered in by the death of the Duke of York. Mr. Huskisson, who had before been slightly indisposed, suffered much from the severity of the cold during his attendance at the funeral. He there laid the foundation of that complaint in the throat, from the

effects of which he never wholly recovered. He returned to Earham on the 21st of January; and on the 24th, Mr. Canning arrived there from Bath, where he had been to visit Lord Liverpool, and to make arrangements for the approaching session. His appearance bore evident signs of lurking malady; and, the day after his arrival, he had a sharp access of cold and fever: but, finding himself better on the following morning, he proceeded to join his family at Brighton; and a few days afterwards, Mr. Huskisson removed to London.

On the day when Lord Liverpool was struck with apoplexy, Mr. Huskisson had been ordered not to leave the house; and the intelligence, therefore, did not reach him till about four in the afternoon. His anxiety to ascertain the particulars induced him to go immediately to Fife House; and this imprudence, and the excitement which ensued from the interruption of public business, produced, in a few days, a decided attack of inflammation of the trachea.

By the beginning of April, Mr. Huskisson's health was sufficiently re-established to allow him to go to Lord Stafford's, at Wimbledon, for change of air; but he did not resume his place in the House of Commons till after the Easter recess.

On the 7th of May, after several postponements, and a long and threatening note of preparation, General Gascoyne brought forward his motion "for a Committee to inquire into the distressed state of the Shipping interest:" when Mr. Huskisson, for the last time, as President of the Board of Trade, undertook the vindication of the recent changes in the Commercial Policy of the country; and, in a speech characterized by the most statesman-like views and sentiments, and abounding in the most valuable commercial information, overthrew the allegations of his opponents, not only by the most convincing reasoning, but by the clearest arithmetical proofs.

In May, Mr. Whitmore brought forward a motion "for a select Committee to inquire into the East India Trade." Mr. Huskisson maintained the propriety of postponing the inquiry; and the statement which he made of his views upon this important question, proved so satisfactory to the House, that all parties joined in supporting his suggestion, and Mr. Whitmore not only con-

sented to withdraw the motion, but expressed his readiness to leave the subject entirely in his hands.

In the course of the same month, Mr. Huskisson took occasion, on the presentation of a petition of the wool-growers of Dorsetshire, to explain the policy which had guided the alterations made in the duties and regulations affecting the Wool Trade, and to exhibit the causes which had produced the immense increase in the growth of wool abroad, especially in Germany. He did not, unfortunately, live to hear how completely the soundness of his arguments, and his views respecting this valuable branch of the manufactures, has been proved.

The session was closed on the 2d of July; and, about the middle of the month, Mr. Huskisson, who had been earnestly recommended by his physicians to try whether the air of the continent, and a total abstraction from business, might not have a beneficial effect upon his debilitated frame, left England for Calais. On the day before his departure, he saw Mr. Canning, who received him in bed. Struck with the alteration in his looks, Mr. Huskisson remarked to him, that he seemed to be the person who stood most in need of change of air and of relaxation. Mr. Canning answered in a cheerful tone,—“Oh, it is only the reflection of the yellow hangings of the curtains.” This was on the 18th of July. On the 19th Mr. Huskisson embarked at the Tower, accompanied by Mrs. Huskisson and his private secretary. On landing at Calais, with the ill luck which constantly pursued him, he entangled his foot in a cable, and lacerated it so severely that he was unable to walk for some days. The party rapidly crossed France to Strasburg; and after a short visit to Baden, proceeded, by the route of Stutgardt and Augsburg, to Munich. Here Mr. Huskisson was induced to remain a few days in the society of Sir Brooke Taylor, the English Minister, and then proceeded on to Salzburg, intending to go to Bad Gastein, the mountainous and bracing air of which had been strongly recommended to him. At Salzburg, he learned that there would probably be much difficulty in procuring accommodations; and, though provided with letters of introduction from the different ambassadors in England, and more particularly from Prince Esterhazy, yet, such was his dislike to anything that savoured of parade or ostentation, that,

instead of sending forward a courier to Gastein, or presenting his letters to the Governor of Salzburg, he quietly relinquished his plan, and turned back to Innsbruck.

On the 14th of August, he reached Innsbruck; and the 12th was the first day in which he appeared really to have derived benefit from his tour. He had recovered from his lameness, and was much pleased with a long walk to the Chateau d'Amras and its environs. Here, too, he had the satisfaction of receiving letters from London, mentioning Mr. Canning's convalescence; and on the 13th, the party set off for the pass of the Monte Spluga, in better spirits, and with brighter hopes than they had yet felt.

On that night, they slept at Landeek; and, on the following afternoon, reached Teldkirch, in the Vararlbeg. Mr. Huskisson's health was now decidedly improving. He had been much interested in the beautiful scenery of the Tyrol; and his mind was recovering its wonted elasticity and playfulness, too soon to be again painfully unstrung. Early on the morning of the 15th instant, just as they were setting off for Caire, an estafette from Sir Brooke Taylor came in, bearing a letter from Lord Granville, at Paris, to announce the alarming turn which Mr. Canning's illness had taken. The route was instantly changed; and on the 20th, the party reached the Hotel of the English Embassy at Paris, having travelled as fast as his own strength and that of Mrs. Huskisson would permit.

The fatal termination of Mr. Canning's illness had become known to him on the road, but without any of the particulars, or any of the ministerial arrangements subsequently proposed: and Mr. Huskisson's impression, more than once expressed to his companions on the road, was, that his own political career had closed for ever. The meeting with Lord Granville—the painful details which he had to learn, and the rapidity with which he had travelled, completely exhausted both his physical and moral strength, and rendered some repose absolutely necessary. Nor did the melancholy incitement to tax either beyond their power in the hope of paying the last mark of public and private regard to his departed friend, then exist; for the funeral of Mr. Canning had taken place on the 16th, the day after the estafette reached Feldkirch.

But, beyond the considerations arising from the state of his own health, Mr. Huskisson was decided to remain a few days in Paris, in order to receive some official and definite information respecting the proposed arrangements for supplying the loss of Mr. Canning, and continuing the existing administration. The expresses which had been despatched from England had taken a different route from that by which Mr. Huskisson had returned; and it was very desirable that either the letters of which they were the bearers, or fresh ones, should explain to him, before he pursued his journey to England, what were the intentions of the remaining members of the Administration, in regard to the remodelling of the government: as, should he decide on declining any proposals made to him, his plan was to have tried the effect of a winter in the south of Europe; and it has already been stated, that the inclination of his mind, from the first moment in which he heard of the death of his friend and colleague, was to listen to the warning voice of his medical friends, and to withdraw entirely from public life.

On the 23d, one of the expresses arrived. The letters of Lord Goderich communicated that he had accepted the office of First Lord of the Treasury, and conveyed an offer, couched in the most friendly and handsome terms, of the Colonial Department, which he had vacated, to Mr. Huskisson. Further letters from England announced that Mr. Grant was, in the event of these proposals being accepted, to succeed to the Presidency of the Board of Trade; and that Lord Lansdowne, and the remaining members of Mr. Canning's government, had declared their acquiescence in these arrangements. All the letters pressed Mr. Huskisson to return without loss of time, and mentioned that the King had expressed his earnest wishes that no delay might take place in his assuming his new office. It was not without considerable hesitation that Mr. Huskisson was persuaded to decide upon continuing in office. His secret inclinations leaned the other way; and he only yielded at last to the arguments and expostulations of his friends, who represented the dissolution of the government, and the consequent annihilation of Mr. Canning's system of policy, as the too probable result of his refusal—arguments and expostulations which were enforced by the special commands of the sovereign.

He left Paris on the 25th, and reached London on the 28th. On the following morning, he waited on the King, at Windsor. A long negotiation commenced; and, after some explanations and much difficulty, Lord Lansdowne, at his Majesty's special request, consented to withdraw the resignation he had tendered. Mr. Huskisson, at the same time, accepted the seals of the Colonial Department; and Mr. Herries was sworn in as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

He had now an opportunity of following up those important commercial regulations, with respect to the Colonial Policy of England, which had occupied so much of his attention at the Board of Trade, and of giving to the improvement and careful revision of the Colonial System all the resources of his powerful mind. He did not long remain idle. Within less than a month after his appointment, an official despatch was addressed by him to Sir John Keane, the Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica, which was dated the 22d of September, and filled seven columns of the Jamaica Gazette. This despatch may safely be pronounced to be a document, not less remarkable for the circumstances under which it was composed, than intrinsically valuable and important for the ability with which it was executed. The interval between Mr. Huskisson's return and his entrance upon the duties of the Colonial Department, had been filled with anxious and unremitting exertions to consolidate the new Ministry; yet, with all the distractions of an unpractised Cabinet, in which he bore his full share, and under the pressure of severe affliction, and of impaired and precarious health, his indefatigable mind found time, in this short period, to master the almost endless details of those thorny and repulsive subjects, which had cost a year's labour to the House of Assembly, and produced a despatch, marked throughout with temper, discrimination, comprehensive sagacity, statesman-like power, and a disregard of all selfish clamour.

Mr. Huskisson's purpose was, to state the objections of the government at home to the very inefficacious manner in which the House of Assembly of Jamaica attempted or professed to carry into execution the principles laid down by the British Parliament, and to fulfil the instructions transmitted by Lord Bath-

urst. The task was a most ungracious one; but it was performed by a master-hand.

But the labours of Mr. Huskisson, in the Colonial Department of his office, soon received a serious interruption. The intelligence which reached England, in November, of the battle of Navarino, and the difficulties which shortly after arose in other quarters, paralyzed the proceedings of government, and threw every thing into a state of doubt and confusion.

At length, towards the close of the year, it became generally understood that Lord Goderich's administration had melted away like a snow-wreath, and that measures were in progress for forming a new one. An ineffectual attempt had been previously made, to prevent the entire dissolution of the existing government. By command of his Majesty, Mr. Huskisson opened a communication with Lord Harrowby. His Lordship waited upon the King, at Windsor, but no inducements could prevail upon him to accept the post of Prime Minister; to which he pleaded his want of health as an insurmountable obstacle: and this proposed arrangement fell to the ground. A yet further delay then ensued; and there are strong grounds for believing that, had Mr. Huskisson listened to the voice of ambition, the situation of Minister was within his grasp; but the recent fate of Mr. Canning was a warning which might have deterred a mind more full of aspiring ambition than Mr. Huskisson's from accepting, under parallel circumstances, that post which the fiat of the aristocracy had declared, should be held only by one of their own order. After another short interval of doubt, the commission to form an administration was given to the Duke of Wellington; and before January expired, the new arrangements were made public.

Mr. Huskisson was re-elected for Liverpool without opposition, and took his seat in the House of Commons on the 11th of February. In the interval, much notice had been attracted to the report of something which was said to have fallen from him during the election, when explaining the motives of his continuance in office, respecting certain guarantees received from the Duke of Wellington; and some unpleasant and angry feelings were manifested, which augured ill for the cordiality of future proceedings. Several allusions were made to this expression in

both Houses; and the Duke of Wellington rather warmly repudiated the idea that he could have been guilty of giving any guarantee for his future conduct. The business was, however, satisfactorily explained by Mr. Huskisson, on the 18th of February, when Lord Normanby brought on a discussion respecting the dissolution of the last, and the conduct of Mr. Huskisson in joining the present, government; and the letter which was read from Mr. Shepherd, on that occasion, set the question of the guarantee finally at rest.

The high estimation in which Mr. Huskisson was held, was strikingly manifested when the appointment of the Committee of Finance was moved. He had declined being placed on it, from a feeling that neither his official duties, nor the state of his health, would allow of his regular attendance on this arduous investigation. The list of names having been read, Mr. Baring arose, and observed, "without any disrespect to the members composing the committee, I may be permitted to say, that the whole aggregate amount of their financial knowledge, bears no proportion to that possessed by the right honourable gentleman. His information and research have penetrated into every corner of our financial and commercial systems: and to except him from the committee, is to shut out the greatest light that can be thrown upon the subjects therein discussed." To this high eulogium, Mr. Brougham added, that the knowledge of all the other members combined was as nothing—as dust in the balance, compared with the resources of his mind. Mr. Huskisson was consequently induced to forego his objections, and his name was added to the committee. He now again, to use his own words, applied himself earnestly and indefatigably to the amelioration of the Colonial System—to strengthen the bonds which attached her distant possessions to the mother-country, and to bring forward, expound, improve, and perfect, measures connected with the foreign commerce and the internal industry of that country,—objects to which his attention had been long sedulously applied. But, besides his correspondence with Sir John Keane, to which we have already alluded, the few months of Mr. Huskisson's Colonial Administration were marked by other important measures:—by the appointment of a committee to examine into the state of the Canadas,

where strong dissatisfaction and growing discontent had long prevailed—by a bill to provide for the administration of justice in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, and by the first step towards the accomplishment of an object, which, in common with every friend of humanity, he had earnestly at heart—the gradual reduction of the British establishments on the Slave Coast of Africa, and the withdrawing of the garrisons from the forts on the Gold Coast. His correspondence with the governors of the West India Colonies, sufficiently proves how earnestly he endeavoured to impress upon the Colonial Legislature, the necessity, as well as wisdom, of giving effect, without delay, to the resolutions of the British Parliament: and how carefully and steadily he applied himself to devise means materially to improve the civil and moral condition of the slave population.

The speeches which he delivered on moving the appointment of a committee to enquire into the state of the Canadas, and on the discussions of the bill to regulate the government of New South Wales, are not only full of the most liberal sentiments, respecting the treatment, by the mother country, of those important colonies, but exhibit such an intimate knowledge of their present state, and comprehensive views for their future prosperity, as could only have been acquired by the most patient research, and impartial communication with every source of information which was open to him.

Mr. Huskisson, with the other members of government in the House of Commons, opposed Lord John Russell's Bill for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts; but his opposition, on this occasion, did not impugn the sincerity of his principles in favour of religious toleration; and he thus explained and defended the grounds of it:—"I am not, abstractedly, unfriendly to the proposition; but I cannot assent to it, because I am sure, that with reference to the Catholic claims, it will make a bad impression. I am convinced, that the present measure, so far from being a step in favour of the Catholic claims, would, if successful, be the means of arraying an additional power against them."

The months of March and April were principally consumed in debates upon the Corn Bill; and, from the tone of the discussions, the public thought they could gather a confirmation of the reports

which had very generally prevailed, of considerable dissensions among the Ministers, respecting the provisions of the bill. Neither Mr. Grant nor Mr. Huskisson professed to consider the scale of duties without objection; and contented themselves with recommending the arrangement, as the best which, under all circumstances, could then be realized. But while Mr. Huskisson was taunted, in the House of Commons, with having consented to compromise his former opinions on the Corn Laws, it was strongly suspected, that the Duke of Wellington had met with a firmer resistance among his liberal colleagues than he had anticipated; and that he, on his part, found the task of introducing the new bill rather an unpalatable comment upon his opposition of the former year.

However strong the suspicions of disunion in the Cabinet, no open proof appeared to confirm them; and, with the passing of the Corn Bill, whatever differences of opinion might have occurred, were supposed to have subsided with the cause which had provoked them.

Mr. Huskisson knew that he was regarded with a suspicious and jealous eye by what is termed the Agricultural Interest; and, in the course of the debates on the propriety of disfranchising East Retford, and transferring the right of election to one of the great manufacturing towns, he thus plainly alluded to the circumstance:—"It has sometimes been said, I know not on what grounds, that I am not a friend to the Agricultural Interest; but I feel the less uneasy under an imputation of that nature, as I am persuaded, that an enlarged view of the policy which I have always recommended, cannot fail to lead to the conclusion, that I have uniformly supported those principles which are best calculated to promote the general interests of each class; and, as a consequence, the good of the whole community."

On the 12th of May, Mr. Huskisson, contrary to the practice which he had usually followed during the life of Mr. Canning, made an able and argumentative speech in favour of the Catholics. On the 13th, he spoke feelingly and eloquently, for granting to the son of Mr. Canning, under the Officer's Pensions Act, an annuity of 3000*l.* a year. It is rather a singular circumstance, that almost the last exertion of his influence, as a Minister, was to

obtain the concurrence of the government to this pension being granted for the joint lives of the two sons of Mr. Canning, with benefit of survivorship. Every one is aware, that but for this extension of the grant, the intention of parliament would have been rendered nugatory by the untimely death of the eldest son in the course of the following summer. , On the 19th, the discussion on East Retford terminated Mr. Huskisson's career as a Minister—he having taken ground in opposition to the Cabinet.

Mr. Huskisson's removal was followed by the resignation of Lords Dudley and Palmerston,—of Mr. Grant, Mr. Lamb, Mr. Frankland Lewis, and Lord Howard de Walden. Lord Granville left Paris; and other changes subsequently occurred in the diplomatic arrangements. Mr. Huskisson did not take much part in the business of the House during the remainder of the session, which offered little of interest; but previous to the close of it, in calling for copies of the American Tariff, he prefaced his motion with one of those able speeches, with which he was wont to rivet the attention of his hearers, whenever he addressed them on points of financial or commercial interest; and laid down and commented on the policy which ought to regulate the intercourse of England with the United States, in his usual luminous and forcible manner.

His health, which had never perfectly recovered from the severe attack of the preceding year, had been still farther shaken by the almost constant anxiety of mind, to which he had been exposed from the moment he heard of Mr. Canning's alarming illness, and by the laborious duties of his office. His physicians were, therefore, urgent in their recommendations, that he should again try the influence of the air of the continent; which he could now enjoy for a longer period; and the recollection of the benefit which he had begun to derive, when his journey was so fatally terminated in the preceding summer, determined him to comply with their advice. Towards the end of July, he and Mrs. Huskisson proceeded to Switzerland. The season proved very unfavourable for the enjoyment of the scenery of that country, and they therefore crossed the Alps; and, after spending a week at Venice, were induced to continue their journey to Rome. Mr. Huskisson had wished to travel as privately as possible; and

had, in consequence, again declined to make use of any of the letters of introduction with which he had been furnished: but at Rome, it being intimated to him that the Pope had a strong desire to receive so firm an advocate of the cause of the English and Irish Catholics, he was presented to his Holiness, and met with a most flattering reception. Private business, which demanded his presence in England, determined him to relinquish Naples, and he returned to England early in November.

The following session was principally occupied with the all-engrossing subject of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill. Mr. Huskisson took an early opportunity of expressing his satisfaction at the course which the government had resolved on pursuing; while, at the same time, he could not refrain from expressing his regret that the conversion of some of its members had not taken place at an earlier period, when that lamented friend, whose unceasing exertions, whose splendid eloquence, and whose brilliant talents, had so greatly contributed to forward and mature this interesting question, both in parliament and in the mind of the public, might have witnessed the triumph of his labours.

Throughout the long discussions to which this bill gave rise, he offered to the government an active and powerful support; and his name occurs in almost all the debates on this subject.

When the state of the Silk Trade was once more brought under the consideration of parliament, by Mr. Tyler, the member for Coventry, Mr. Huskisson came forward to maintain and defend those principles of trade which he had so long advocated; and declared that experience only confirmed him in the conviction, that a gradual relaxation of the restrictive system was invariably followed by a gradual improvement in manufactures, commerce, and revenue. The effect of this speech was conclusive; and the Silk Question, that fertile source of debate for the last four sessions, now received its quietus.

In all the discussions which arose with respect to the future arrangements to be made on the renewal of the East India Company's charter, Mr. Huskisson took a warm interest, both as member for Liverpool, and in reference to the great commercial interests involved in it. But he did not confine his views to the narrow limits of commercial considerations. His enlightened

mind embraced topics of infinitely higher importance—topics which involved the tranquillity and happiness of millions of subjects, who looked to England for protection—the improvement in civilization, the increase of comforts, and the exaltation of the moral character of the natives of India. It is probable that Mr. Huskisson felt an additional interest in the settlement of the India question, and that he had turned his mind more closely to the consideration of it, from the circumstance that it had more than once been proposed to him to proceed thither. The government of Madras had been offered to him, previously to the appointment of Sir Thomas Munro; and it was principally from the opinions of his medical advisers, as well as from his own indifference to wealth, that he determined to decline it. At a later period, there is little reason to doubt, it is affirmed, that the supreme government of India might have been his. It is true that no positive offer was made to him; but it certainly was hinted at, and the hint rejected without a moment's hesitation: his constitution being then too far debilitated to allow him to entertain the idea of a residence in a hot climate.

So often as the opportunity presented itself, did Mr. Huskisson endeavour to impress upon the government the wisdom of reducing the amount of unfunded debt, in the hands of the Bank. Of the necessity of this, he appears to have been long sensible; but in the latter years of his life, he became even more alive to the importance of some arrangement by which the evil might be alleviated. One of the great and favourite objects of his commercial policy, and one which he never lost sight of, was, the promotion of every measure which might be calculated to make England the entrepôt of the world. It was with this view that he had shown himself so desirous that foreign copper ores might be allowed to be smelted in England, for the purposes of exportation—a permission which was vehemently opposed by the proprietors of mines in England.

In the month of August, Mr. Huskisson paid a visit to his constituents, at Liverpool. It was the first time he had met them as a private individual; and his reception was as honourable to the good taste and feeling of the commercial community of that great city as it was gratifying to himself.

Parliament was now about to meet under circumstances of peculiar difficulty. During the three last sessions, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, small progress had been made in any measures for the relief or improvement of the country. In that of 1827, first the illness of Lord Liverpool, and then the delays attendant on the formation of a new government, had occupied the greater portion of the session: the following year had been consumed, in a great measure, with like difficulties and delays: and in the last, every thing had given way to, and been overlooked in the settlement of the Roman Catholic question. The public began to demand greater proofs of an efficient Administration, and to manifest strong symptoms of disquietude and dissatisfaction.

Both Houses assembled on the 4th of February; and the language held by the partizans of Ministers was still that of confident security. They evidently calculated their strength on the improbability of a cordial union between the different parties into which the opposition was split; and on the divisions of their opponents, they built their best hopes of riding out the storm which was gathering around them. This security received a staggering blow on the first night's debate on the Address, when the government reeled to its centre, and might have been overthrown, had it not been for the unexpected assistance of that party which, to borrow a phrase from the French, may be termed the extreme left. This party went over in a body to their support; and, by this manœuvre, the amendment was negatived, and the original address carried by a small majority. On this occasion, Mr. Huskisson both voted and spoke in favour of the amendment; but, faithful to his recorded opinions, and keenly alive to the danger of misconception or misrepresentation on points on which many of the principal supporters of the amendment were known to entertain views and tenets totally irreconcilable with his own, he distinctly stated the grounds upon which his support was given, "in order to guard against the possibility of its being supposed, that he was not most anxious to protect the country from the evils which must ensue from any fresh attempt to alter the currency."

When the Disfranchisement Bill was once more brought for-

ward, Mr. Huskisson again raised his warning voice, and emphatically urged the wisdom and justice of transferring the elective franchise to Birmingham. Again he pointed out the immense importance of this measure in reference to the general question of reform, and avowed his conviction, that it was of the utmost consequence to deal with the present case so as best to guard against the growing danger of sweeping reform, on principles too abstract and general.

Notwithstanding all the exertions of government, the amendment for transferring the right of election to Birmingham, was only defeated by a very trifling majority. This effort to commence a moderate and reasonable reform having failed, Mr. Huskisson, who was deeply sensible of the danger resulting from this continued resistance to the wishes of the public, next supported a motion of Lord John Russell's, for giving representations to Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham—a measure which he enforced by the most powerful arguments; and stated that the time was fast approaching when, if it were now rejected, Ministers would be obliged themselves to propose such a step, as necessary for the safety and salvation of the country.

Though devoting himself, with infinite labour, to his attendance on the East India Committee, and though evidently suffering under symptoms of indisposition, Mr. Huskisson took an active part in most of the important debates of this session. His speeches relating to Mexico, in particular, will be found full of valuable observations on the situation and prospects of that country, and on the probable views and policy of the United States towards her; and are doubly interesting, as marking the vigilant eye with which he regarded the conduct of England, in her relations with that portion of the world; the importance of which has been too generally undervalued by the statesmen of Europe.

One of the most finished and successful speeches he ever made, was that delivered on Mr. Davenport's motion for "an inquiry into the causes of the distress of the nation;" which, at the request of his friends, he afterwards revised for publication—a task he could seldom be persuaded to undertake. The views stated in this speech he enlarged upon, in subsequent debate on the subject of injudicious taxation; when he declared his unalterable

conviction, that the upholding of the present Corn Laws, and of the present system of taxation, was incompatible with an increase of national prosperity, or with the preservation of national contentment: and expressed his opinion, that those laws might be repealed without affecting the Landed Interest, and at the same time, the distress of the people be relieved.

In pursuance of those opinions which he had so often advocated, and in conformity with the whole tenor of his public life, Mr. Huskisson gave a powerful and cordial support to the bill brought forward by Mr. Robert Grant, for the removal of the various disabilities affecting persons of the Jewish persuasion. Mr. Huskisson's name will also be found in the list of the minority who voted for repealing the punishment of death in cases of forgery. On this subject, he was known to entertain considerable hesitation; but where so much doubt prevailed, even among those who had considered the question with the profoundest attention, he felt, conscientiously, that it became the duty of a legislator, to give the benefit of that doubt to the side of mercy and humanity; and that the experiment of substituting a milder penalty deserved at least to be tried. He therefore supported the amendment moved by Sir James Mackintosh.

When, in the month of June, the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced his resolutions respecting the Sugar Duties, a most animated debate ensued. Mr. Huskisson had, on a former occasion, expressed his conviction, that great as might be the pressure and the difficulties upon other interests in the country, there was none labouring under more difficulties, or requiring more urgently that relief should be given to it, than the West India Interest. He now dissected and criticised the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with a force and effect which carried confusion into the ranks of the Treasury; and he denounced the undecided and vacillating conduct which marked all the measures of government. The unpremeditated readiness with which Mr. Huskisson overthrew the propositions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—the clearness and acuteness with which he exposed their fallacy—the force of his arguments, and the severity of his sarcasm, made an impression upon the House, almost unprecedented in matters of such dry detail. The government had

a majority in their favour; but this made but small amends for the mortification they sustained from the caustic denunciations of Mr. Huskisson, and the bitter taunts of Mr. Brougham; and they subsequently abandoned their original proposition.

Little more remains of the parliamentary history of Mr. Huskisson. As a small, but immediate measure of relief to the crying distresses of the West India proprietors, he proposed a reduction of the duties levied on rum in Scotland and Ireland; but, on an assurance that the government would be ready, at another time, to enter upon the question, and in consideration of the advanced state of the session, and the absence of many of the Irish members, he consented not to press his resolution to a division. His speech on the West India Question was the last he ever made within the walls of that House, of which he was, for so many years, one of the greatest ornaments.

He only said a few words, on the 13th of July, in answer to a complaint of Mr. Wilmot Horton's, that he had omitted, in his speech on the state of the country, to advert to emigration, as one essential mode of relief: to which observation, Mr. Huskisson merely replied, that he had only addressed himself to measures of immediate relief; and that, though no enemy to emigration, it appeared to him to be a subject demanding great and serious consideration.

Such is a brief outline of Mr. Huskisson's parliamentary history; and an outline is, unfortunately, all that can be offered of many even of his most important speeches. Indifferent to display—speaking frequently without the slightest preparation—rising late in the debate, and addressing himself to subjects the least attractive to all but those whose interests were involved, it is not surprising, that many of his speeches should be imperfectly reported. The speeches which he was prevailed upon to publish, were subjected to a careful revision; but it was a task which he undertook with considerable reluctance. In composition, he was difficult in the selection of his words, and in the arrangement of his sentences: and without, perhaps, carrying fastidiousness to the extent which Mr. Canning is reported to have done, it may still be fairly said, that he never spared the file. This, however, is true as applied to official papers. In his common corre-

spondence, his style was strongly indicative of his character—simple, easy, and natural.

For some time past, his physical system had evidently been suffering under a degree of languor and debility which required care and rest; and showed itself by no means equal to the heavy demands made upon it, by the incessant activity of his mental powers. Influenced by the recollection of past favours, and by the feelings of gratitude which he always cherished towards George IV., for the kindness and confidence with which he had treated him whilst a servant of the Crown, and unmindful of the inadequacy of his strength to any considerable fatigue and excitement, Mr. Huskisson determined to pay the last mark of respectful duty, by attending the funeral ceremony of the monarch. For this purpose, he left town on the 14th of July, for Sir George Warrender's at Clifden, and, on the following evening, proceeded to Windsor.

The procession had scarcely begun to move from St. George's Hall, when he felt himself ill; and, as it was then impossible to withdraw, he continued, during the whole of the long ceremony, in great suffering. As soon as he could leave the Chapel, he returned to Clifden, where he remained seriously ill the whole of the following day. On Saturday, he was sufficiently relieved to be removed to London, where he underwent an operation, which was most skilfully performed by Dr. Copeland, but which confined him to his room for a fortnight, and greatly reduced him.

On the 13th of July, he had received the following requisition from Liverpool:—

Sir,

His Majesty having, by his royal Message, intimated his intention of speedily dissolving the present parliament, and calling a new one, we, the undersigned, freemen and other inhabitants of Liverpool, again seek the assurance of your willingness to be put in nomination to represent this borough. We gratefully acknowledge the particular and effective care which our local interests have ever received from you; and, on having your permission, we pledge ourselves to use our utmost exertions to maintain a connexion, which hitherto has been to us so acceptable and gratifying.

Never within the annals of that borough, had a requisition so numerously and respectably signed, been sent to a candidate;

Early the next morning the party proceeded to Wavertree, to the point where they were to join the grand procession. It is scarcely necessary to repeat here, that nothing could exceed the success of the undertaking, up to the moment of the arrival of the procession at Parkside, where the engine was stopped to take in a fresh supply of water. It has been said that it was not intended for any one to leave the carriages, and that a placard to this effect was issued by the Directors. If such was the case, the advice was little understood, or, at any rate, wholly neglected; for many, indeed most of the gentlemen in the Northumbrian, in which the Directors and the most distinguished of the visitors were placed, took advantage of the interval during which the procession stopped, to leave it, and to disperse in various groups upon the railway. According to some of the accounts in the daily journals, two of the steam-engines, the Phoenix and the North Star, passed without causing any accident; and the parties were returning into the grand car, when an alarm was given, that the Rocket was rapidly approaching. This report caused considerable confusion, and every one hurried to resume his place. In the ordinary cars, there were steps on each side, by which they could be easily entered; but these had been removed from the Northumbrian, it having been considered, that a flight of steps, in the form of a ladder, suspended at the back, and which could be brought at will to any part of it, would afford greater convenience to the ladies. Owing to this arrangement, a main chance of escape was cut off from those who were on the rail-road: and this explains the difficulty and danger experienced by Prince Esterhazy, and several others, when they hastily endeavoured to regain their seats.

Among those who had descended, was Mr. Huskisson. When about to return, he observed the Duke of Wellington in the front of the car, and not having seen him before, he went round to welcome him on his visit to Liverpool, and to congratulate him on the satisfactory results of the morning's experiment. To the short delay arising from this act of courtesy, may be attributed the dreadful calamity which ensued. The cry arose that the Rocket was rapidly approaching. Mr. Huskisson hurried round the side of the Northumbrian, and, grasping at the door, at-

tempted to get in: the door swung back, and this sudden re-action threw him on the ground, at the moment when the fatal engine was coming on with the utmost velocity; and, before its course could be arrested, he had received his mortal injury.

Such, at least, is supposed to have been the case; but other explanations, as to the cause of the fearful accident, have been given; and every one can perfectly understand the impossibility of determining with certainty, the precise particulars of such a scene of horror and confusion. But whatever may have been the immediate occasion of his fall, he was himself convinced at once that the injury was fatal. Lord Wilton and several others were instantly at his side. They raised him a little, and a tourniquet, formed with a stick and a handkerchief, was applied without loss of time. He asked earnestly for Mrs. Huskisson, kissed her, and then said, "God bless you all; now let me die at once."

From the hasty judgment which could be formed, it appeared to the professional gentlemen present, that there was a hope of saving his life, by an amputation of the shattered limb. It was therefore agreed, that the most expeditious and most practicable method of proceeding would be to go on to Manchester, where the best surgical assistance could be speedily procured. A car which had been occupied by the band was emptied, and he was placed in it, attended by Mrs. Huskisson, Lords Wilton and Colville, Dr. Brandeth, of Liverpool, Dr. Hunter, of Edinburgh, and Mr. Wainewright. The engine was then detached from the larger carriage, and the utmost despatch used for providing for the conveyance of the sufferer. Notwithstanding the agonies which he endured, no complaint or groan escaped him. He asked for a little water, with which Mrs. Huskisson moistened his lips; and he himself suggested the seeking the quiet of some private house, if any could be found on the way, in preference to the crowd and confusion which must have been encountered at Manchester. Lord Wilton named the vicarage at Eccles, the residence of the Rev. Mr. Blackbourne, through which the procession passed. Mr. Huskisson caught eagerly at the proposal, and said, "Oh, take me there, I know they will be good to me!" After depositing him at Eccles, Lord Wilton, whose kindness

and exertions never flagged throughout all the melancholy occurrences of the day, proceeded with the engine to Manchester, and returned with incredible expedition, bringing with him Mr. Ransome, Mr. Whatton, and some other professional gentlemen.

Mr. Huskisson himself had never doubted from the first that his injuries were mortal: but when the surgeons arrived, he expressed himself willing to undergo whatever might be judged satisfactory to the feelings or wishes of those who surrounded him. He only entreated that Mrs. Huskisson, who had never quitted him, would absent herself whilst Mr. Ransome and his colleagues examined what it might be possible to attempt. After a careful consultation, they decided unanimously that, in the extreme state of exhaustion to which the sufferer was reduced, amputation, though indispensable in order to effect a recovery, could not be undertaken without the most imminent danger; and Mr. Ransome candidly declared his conviction, that should he commence the operation, under existing circumstances, the patient must inevitably expire under it. Mrs. Huskisson was now permitted to return; and attempts were made to create a re-action, by administering powerful restoratives, but in vain. Violent spasmodic convulsions rendered him gradually weaker, and occasionally wrung from him an expression of hope that his sufferings might not be prolonged. But although his agonies were almost past endurance, there were no unnecessary ejaculations, no murmurings against the dispensation of Providence: on the contrary, he evinced throughout the most patient fortitude and resignation. The clearness of his mind continued perfect and unclouded. He made a codicil to his will, and gave directions on minute points, respecting the disposal of several of his private papers. It is also true, that having signed his name, he desired to have the paper brought back to him, in order to rectify an omission which he had made in the usual mode of his signature.

Soon after six o'clock, he desired to see Mr. Blackbourne, in order to perform the last duties of religion. Before the sacrament was administered, he used these words,—“I can safely say that I bear no ill-will to any human being.” It was at first feared, that this ceremony would be attended with some difficulty, as he had been for some time unable to raise his head, or to swallow,

and only had his lips moistened occasionally with a feather. He, however, summoned up all his expiring strength, and, with great exertion, partook of the elements. This done, he again expressed his anxiety for a speedy release; and even those about him, when they beheld his hopeless sufferings, no longer dared to wish them prolonged. Still the kindness of his nature rose superior to his own agonies. Observing that her wretchedness had deprived Mrs. Huskisson of the power of utterance, and that she was incapable of replying even to the expression of some of his injunctions, he endeavoured to console her; and the last words he addressed to her were, an assurance that he felt they should meet again.

He then recommended her to the care of Lord Wilton. Speaking of himself, he used the expression which has been reported:—"The public have had the best of me, and I trust they will do me justice." This was the only allusion which he made to his public character. He appeared to receive much gratification from the presence of Lord Granville, to whom he spoke several times in terms of the greatest affection: he continued, indeed, to be sensible of all that had been done for him, and grateful to all those around him, especially to Lord Wilton, upon whom he said he had no claim, as little previous acquaintance had subsisted between them. Soon after eight, it became evident that he was sinking rapidly, and at five minutes after nine, nature was completely exhausted, and he breathed his last, after nine hours of the most excruciating torture.

Mrs. Huskisson having been removed from the room by the care of her friends, the surgeons proceeded to a nearer investigation of the injuries which Mr. Huskisson had sustained. It was then discovered that he must have fallen obliquely, as regarded the line of the railway, and that the thigh and leg must have been in such a position as to have formed with it a triangle, of which the angle at the apex would be presented by the bend of the knee. The wheel of the engine thus passed over the calf of the leg, and the middle of the thigh, leaving the knee itself uninjured. There was a compound fracture in the upper part of the left leg, just above the calf. The wheel must have gone slantingly over the thigh up to the middle of it, as the muscles were all laid bare,

in that direction, in one immense flap; and the bone was severely fractured, and comminuted almost to powder. No great effusion of blood took place, nor did any of the great arteries appear to have been wounded, but the laceration is described to have been terrible. Such, at least, are the statements of the journals of that fearful day.

The death of Mr. Huskisson was made known in Liverpool at an early hour on Thursday morning; and though it had been anticipated as certain by all who knew the nature of the accident, yet it took the bulk of the people by surprise. All the shops and dwelling-houses were partially closed from one end of the town to the other. The flags on the public buildings, and on the shipping in the ports, were hoisted half-mast, and the inhabitants, without distinction of party, were plunged into the deepest sorrow. A very general wish was expressed that the remains of their lamented representative should be interred in the new cemetery, and that a monument should be erected over them, recording the melancholy event, and rendering a well-deserved tribute to his memory. A meeting of gentlemen accordingly took place at the Town Hall, on Thursday, to consider of the subject; and the following requisition to the Mayor was unanimously agreed upon:—

We, the undersigned, respectfully request that you, as the official organ of the inhabitants of Liverpool, will make an immediate application to the friends of our late lamented Representative, requesting that his remains may be interred within the precincts of this town, in which his distinguished public worth and private virtue secured for him the respect and esteem of the whole community.

To this requisition, the names of two hundred and sixty-four most respectable and influential gentlemen were immediately attached. The request was promptly acceded to; and the Rev. J. Brooks, the Rector, was desired to proceed to Eccles, to see Mrs. Huskisson or her friends upon the subject.

The idea of Mr. Huskisson's interment at Liverpool had been already broken to Mrs. Huskisson; but she had expressed the strongest repugnance to such an arrangement. All her own wishes naturally pointed to Eartham; and it was only through the powerful arguments, and strong representations of Lord

Granville, that she was at last prevailed upon to sacrifice her own feelings, and to yield to the request of the inhabitants of Liverpool. Never was a sacrifice of private feelings more honourably and solemnly required. It was forcibly remarked, at the time, that if any thing could supersede the necessity of drawing a character of Mr. Huskisson, it was to be found in the circumstance of his funeral. It spoke volumes. A community attended it composed entirely of active, intelligent individuals, who, of all others, are best able to appreciate the merits of a man ruling and regulating the destinies of a commercial people, and that community, consisting of a hundred and fifty thousand individuals, deploring his loss with a grief as intense and real as is occasioned by the severing of kindred ties.

The following characters of Mr. Huskisson are taken from the Annual Obituary, and an anonymous work, called "Babylon the Great." It should be observed, that the latter work was published early in 1825, consequently, prior to the delivery of most of those speeches on which Mr. Huskisson's fame, as a practical debater, principally rests.

"Of eloquence, in the ordinary sense of the term, Mr. Huskisson had but little. He could neither gripe, nor hold fast the heart, like Mr. Brougham, by the irresistible energy of his appeals, nor could he please the ear and the fancy, with the nicely modulated language, and the effervescing wit of Mr. Canning. Yet not even the former, in his most solemn adjuration, nor the latter, in his happiest flight, ever commanded the attention of his hearers more completely than Mr. Huskisson. He was never unprepared, whatever might be the subject of discussion; and it was not in set harangues only that he excelled—he was a clear and able debater. When he first entered upon his subject, his manner was cold, almost heavy; his intonation equable, almost monotonous: he had no peculiar grace of action. The secret of his oratory lay in the facility with which he could bring a number of facts to bear upon his argument, and in the soundness and comprehensiveness of his views. He was not an opponent with whom it was difficult to grapple; for he disdained all slippery arts of avoiding an antagonist: but he was one whom the stoutest champion found it impossible to throw. To the matter-of-fact arguer, Mr. Huskisson could present an accumulation of details, sufficient to stagger the most practical; while to him who looked to rules rather than cases, he could offer general principles, conceived in so large a spirit, that even in his dry and unadorned enunciation of them, they rose to solemnity.

Nothing could be finer than the splendid perorations of his more elaborate speeches. It was by the combination of an attention so accurate, that the most minute objection did not escape his vigilance, and a judgment so comprehensive, that the greatest could not elude its grasp, coupled with habits of unremitting industry, and perfect integrity of purpose, that Mr. Huskisson, on every question of complication and importance, reigned almost undisputed in the House of Commons. Irresistible as it generally proved, no one, however, dreaded its power. He convinced or he silenced; but he never irritated. His peculiar calmness of temper kept him from indulging in sarcasm. He seldom uttered an ill-natured word, because he was seldom influenced by an ill-natured feeling."

In the Parliamentary Portraits, contained in the second-named work, after describing Mr. Canning, the author thus introduces Mr. Huskisson:—

" You may observe the glorious Gothic head of his most profound coadjutor. It is a plain head; and small labour of the barber has been bestowed on the outside. I know not whether he may be a phrenologist, though I should rather imagine that he knows the whim, and laughs at it; certainly he seems to stand less in awe of phrenological criticism than any member of the House: who could, if he chose, command sufficient pilosity for a screen for his hair, is cropped as close as that of a ploughman. This circumstance increases the size of his face, especially his forehead; and gives him when the light does not fall, so as to bring out the acute lines and wonderful indications of depth upon it, an air which you would be apt to call common-place, if not heavy.

Mr. Huskisson is altogether the most difficult character in the whole House to manage. There is nothing in his appearance, his manner, or his speaking, upon which you can hitch even the slightest descriptive figure; and if it were possible to disembody sheer political intellect, and leave it without any of the trappings of ornament, that would be the nearest approach to a likeness of this most plain, but profound member of St. Stephen's. Mr. Huskisson's bearing is remarkably shrewd and firm; and, though he deals not much either in irony or declamation—and the less he deals in them the better—he occasionally sends forth a look, while some pretender is uttering a truism with oracular gravity, which is more cutting and corrective than any commentary in words. He is very unassuming, but withal so self-possessed and so decided, that you do not need to be told, that he has examined, with the eye of a true philosopher, all the bearings subject that comes before the House. His voice is against him, is feeble without softness; and he gains nothing either by show

or fluency of language: but still the impression which he leaves upon your mind is, that he has more expansion and depth of intellect, and more range and inflexibility of purpose, than any man within the same walls."

To these we are tempted to add one more extract. It is from the *Liverpool Journal*, of the 18th of September.

"Politics, this week, must give place to an expression of sorrow for the melancholy event which has deprived commerce of her best friend, Liverpool of an honest representative, and the empire of a statesman, who has left behind him no equal.

"The disastrous details of Mr. Huskisson's death will be found in another part of our paper; and the heart saddens into inexpressible grief to find one of "earth's great spirits" cut off in the moment of exultation; and though there was "reckoning made," the event was, alas, sudden enough to be pronounced awful. The survivors, however, are more deserving of sympathy than the departed. He could afford to die much better than we could afford to lose him; and it must have soothed his manly spirit, in the last agonies of existence, to know that he encountered death in endeavouring to forward the interest of that commerce which he had lived to promote. A nation, he knew, would mourn his loss, and his constituents do honour to his memory. We trust his remains, as has been suggested, will be deposited in the St. James's Cemetery. The public, we know, will rejoice in the opportunity of testifying their veneration, by erecting a suitable monument.

"Mr. Huskisson was truly one of the nobles of nature. He achieved greatness by mental exertions; and his name is endearing, because it was attained by those patriot services which are identified with revolutions in political science. He taught nations the way to be wisely great; and, in bursting the shackles which restrained the energies of Trade, gave a mighty impulse at once both to industry and mind. Mr. Huskisson was not one of those fortunate politicians who are prematurely thrust into power. Though early dignified by the friendship of Mr. Dundas, he seems to have wanted those qualities that conciliate the great. The praise of usefulness could not be denied to him; but his colleagues were slow to recognize in him the attributes which, at a later period, rendered him so formidable to his opponents in the House of Commons. With an unostentatious patriotism, he was content to suggest measures, and allow others the applause; and that political humility must have been great which could endure in silence to hear awarded to less talented co-operators the praise which of right did not belong to them. The capacity of his mind was large, and, in its comprehension, looked abroad with phi-

lophilic liberality, neglectful of self, and solicitous only for the establishment of truth. There was nothing narrow in his views. His policy was marked by a generous philanthropy, that contemplated man everywhere as a fellow-being; and, knowing that we were intended for other purposes than those which arise out of warfare and enmity, he sought to establish a brotherhood of nations that could not fail to promote universal happiness, and increase still farther the greatness of his own country.

"For what he has accomplished, the benedictions of the intelligent portion of the world will follow him to the grave; and while men will bless his memory, the commercial world will lament that his life was not longer spared to consummate the great work he had so nobly begun."

On his retirement from office, in 1801, Mr. Huskisson received a nominal pension of 1200*l.*, but netting only 900*l.* a year, (contingent upon his not holding any office of that value) with a remainder of 315*l.* to Mrs. Huskisson, to commence from his death. He was subsequently appointed Colonial Agent for the island of Ceylon, the salary of which was at first 800*l.* a year, but was afterwards raised, by the voluntary act of the island, to 1200*l.* a year, as a special remuneration for his valuable services. When placed at the head of the Board of Trade, he considered an agency as incompatible with that high appointment, and resigned. Before Lord Liverpool's political demise, he had, unsolicited, given instructions that Mr. Huskisson should be designated for one of the six pensions of 3000*l.* which, by Act of Parliament, the Crown is empowered to bestow on persons who have served particular offices for a certain period: and, on his final removal from government, in 1828, he entered upon the receipt of this pension, in which his former one, of course, merged.

"In private," says the writer from whom we have abridged this sketch, "Mr. Huskisson's character will challenge the closest scrutiny. There, even calumny is silent. Those who profess not to number themselves among his political admirers, admit the kindness of his nature, the integrity of his conduct, and the purity of his mind; while they bear undisputed testimony to the charm of his manners in social intercourse. There was, nevertheless, in ordinary society, if nothing arose to call him forth, a degree of restraint, almost of coldness, in his demeanour, which did not at first prepossess in his favour, and which caused many

to feel a difficulty in making his acquaintance, and led them to a wrong estimate of his character and his disposition. But this difficulty once mastered—the ice once broken—no one was more delightful, no one possessed greater attraction; and all impressions of reserve or of indifference vanished before the rapid transitions of intellectual expression which lit up his countenance as he conversed, the tone of his voice, and the peculiar sweetness of his smile. Constitutionally averse from all display, his manner was chiefly captivating from the indulgent kindness, the easy gaiety, and the unaffected simplicity with which he laid aside all traces of the statesman, and identified himself with the pursuits, the interests, and the feelings of others. Fond of society, he was courted and esteemed by all who knew him; and he lived in habits of intimacy and friendship with the most eminent persons of all parties, uninterrupted by any difference of political opinion. But it was in the narrowest and inmost circle of domestic life—in the company of his most intimate friends, and around his own fireside, that all the beauties of his mind, and all the charms of his nature could alone be appreciated. It was there that the feelings of affection towards him were sublimed, (if the expression may be pardoned), by the admiration of his superior endowments; it was there that the sweetness of his temper, and the benevolence which beamed in his eye, and marked every sentiment which fell from his lips, were irresistibly felt and acknowledged. Whether estimated as a husband, relation, or friend—as a magistrate, a landlord, or a master, he deserved and secured unbounded love, respect, and confidence. Charitable without ostentation, his purse was ever open to the calls of distress. No misery was suffered to exist in the village where he resided: the President of the Board of Trade or the Secretary of State never refused his assistance or advice towards adjusting the disputes, or arranging the difficulties, of his humble neighbours. None ever left his door unrelieved, and none ever received from him a harsh word. Such was he whom it has been attempted to paint in the most repulsive colours—to represent as indifferent to the wants and sufferings of his fellow-creatures—as ready to view the misery of thousands unmoved, for the sake of an experiment in political economy.”

SELECT SPEECHES

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM HUSKISSON.

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SPEECHES.

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM HUSKISSON.

**AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS,
AND THE FINANCIAL MEASURES FOR ITS RELIEF.**

FEBRUARY 15, 1822.

THIS day the Marquis of Londonderry called the attention of the House to the subject of the existing Agricultural Distress, and entered into a detail of the Financial Measures which it was the intention of his Majesty's Government to submit to Parliament for its Relief. The noble Marquis concluded by moving, "that returns be laid upon the table, of the revenue and expenditure, exclusive of the funded and unfunded debt, for the year ending the 5th of January 1821, together with similar accounts for the year ending the 5th of January 1822;" and he gave notice that he would in a few days move for the revival of the Agricultural Committee, and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would bring forward a measure for enabling the Bank to issue four millions on Exchequer Bills, in loans to different parishes, and would also submit a proposition for reducing the present amount of the duty on Malt. After M. Brougham had entered into an examination of the proposed measure,

MR. HUSKISSON rose. He began by remarking, that the motion then before the House was simply for an account, to the production of which there could be no possible objection. But inasmuch as the comprehensive speech of his noble friend, who had introduced that motion, necessarily embraced topics similar to those which had been brought under the view of the House by an honourable and learned gentleman* on a preceding day, and again that evening, the present discussion might be considered in the light of an adjourned debate upon the nature and causes of the present distress. He was the more at liberty to look at it in that point of view, without violating either the forms or the rules of the House, as the honourable and learned gentleman's motion, on

* Mr. Brougham.

Monday last, had been met, and most properly disposed of, not upon its merits, but by the previous question. That motion, however, had answered the honourable and learned gentleman's purpose. It enabled him to range over the whole manor of political economy, to fire his shots at random, and then to-day, when the minister of the Crown was obliged to go over the same beat, the honourable and learned gentleman came forward, in no very sportsman-like manner, to claim as his own the fruits of the noble lord's more steady pursuit. That the honourable and learned gentleman, however, was mistaken in supposing that the noble lord's plans had been changed, in consequence of his speech, he could assure him, from his own personal knowledge; but, independently of his assertion, he would leave to the House to determine, considering the circumstances under which the honourable and learned gentleman had made his motion, whether it was not more probable that the object of his speech had been to anticipate the measures of government, than that those measures, adopted after long and mature deliberation, had been altered to accommodate themselves to the impression made by the speech of the honourable and learned member.

Leaving him, however, in the enjoyment of his fancied triumph, he should think himself at liberty, in rising to state his own view of our present difficulties, to refer also to the honourable and learned member's speech of the former night, as far as it related to the subject of the present discussion. He felt this to be the more necessary, whatever might be the indiscretion of entering upon so wide a field, and the indisposition of the House to attend to matters necessarily dry and uninviting, as he had never heard a speech more abounding in mistaken assertions, more fraught with erroneous principles and contradictory inferences, more pregnant with alarm, mischief and danger, or more calculated to mislead the judgment by a delusive appeal to the prejudices and sufferings of the people; and to hurry parliament itself into a course which, if once entered upon, it would be too late to retrace, however much they might afterwards deplore their error. He did not ascribe this character to the honourable and learned gentleman's views, under the influence of party spirit—far from it; his wish was, as much as possible, to keep the mighty interests at stake out of the range of party feeling. Looking to the complicated relationships existing between the landed interest and all the other great interests of the country, and to the manifold difficulties of the subject, he could wish gentlemen to come to its examination in that House as calmly and dispassionately as they would to a similar discussion in the closet. This was the course which he was determined to pursue, stating fearlessly his own impressions, with the greatest deference certainly to the judgment

of others with whom he had the misfortune to differ, either in or out of parliament, but without any personal consideration, except that of regret at the existence of any such difference between their sentiments and his own.

When the subject to be considered is the *present* distress, it is natural to look back to periods of *past* distress, in the hope that, by a reference to former sufferings, some useful lessons of experience, some valuable inferences, and some monitory cautions may be derived, to serve as a guide to carry us through the straits and difficulties of the present moment. Without going into a long detail, or to remote events, he could wish gentlemen to bear in mind that, in most instances of former severe distress, we have had to encounter evils (and those evils attended with symptoms and dangers), which fortunately do not press upon us at this moment. Let them recall to their recollection the heart-rending accounts which, on former occasions, have reached us from the population of our manufacturing and trading districts. How long is it since the House was told, and told with too much truth, that a considerable proportion of those condensed masses of the people were destitute of employment or resource, almost perishing in the streets for want of food or clothing, having sold piece-meal their furniture to sustain life; that the manufactories were closed, the prisons overflowing, the work-houses crowded to excess, the shipping of the country unemployed and rotting in port? It is impossible to have forgotten the period when, in those districts, misery was so general and so urgent, that neither the compulsory levies of the poor-rates, nor the liberal aid of voluntary benevolence, could adequately administer to its relief; when that misery, goaded on by public agitators, was rushing into acts of desperation; when life and property were equally insecure—at least, when they could not be protected by the ordinary administration of law; and when expensive military precautions and new-laws became, therefore, necessary to preserve the public peace.

What, in those perilous times which followed so rapidly upon the restoration of peace, was the language of the same men, who had so steadily and systematically foretold the defeat and humiliation of our arms during the whole progress of the war? The trade of foreign prophecy was fortunately at an end, but faithful to their vocation, they entered upon the new field opened to them by our domestic difficulties. These difficulties, we were told, were the necessary consequences of taxation and high prices—that we had saved Europe, that we had acquired military glory indeed, but that the price had been the ruin of England—that in this country the expense of living was so great, that we could no longer manufacture or navigate in competition with other nations—that our manufacturing and trading capitals would seek employ-

ment in less burthened countries—that the middle classes would migrate to live cheaper and better abroad, and that the bulk of our industrious population would in consequence be left destitute from want of employment.

The manufacturing population, assured by these prophets of misfortune, that their then misery was only the beginning of the still greater privations which awaited them, were further told, that the magnitude of the public debt was the foundation of all the evils under which they laboured—that this debt was the creature of a corrupt parliament; and that the alternative was, on the one hand, ruin and starvation, or on the other, the annihilation of the “pretended national debt,” and a radical reform of the House of Commons. These were the only remedies at that time; they are the only remedies of the same class of politicians for our agricultural difficulties at the present moment. If any one doubt this, let him compare the proceedings of all the popular meetings about four years ago, in the manufacturing parts of the kingdom, with the speeches at several of the meetings lately called in the agricultural districts. He will find in both cases the same doctrines inculcated, in many instances too, by the same individuals, and adopted by those who listened to them, as the *panaceas* for all their difficulties.

But our manufacturing distress was attended with alarming symptoms, which excited apprehension even among men not given to despond. Consumption had diminished, and was rapidly diminishing—the revenue was falling off from week to week, and from quarter to quarter—public credit was very low—private credit out of the question, upon the best securities, within the limits of legal interest. These certainly were indications of the country being in a labouring, if not in a declining state. The argument, therefore, of those who took a gloomy view of our affairs was at least intelligible, and the conclusion consistent with the argument, although in the degree it might be pushed too far. In substance the argument was this—taxation has a tendency to raise prices, the rise of prices to render labour dear, and dear labour to drive capital to seek more profitable employment elsewhere. But that taxation can be the cause of low prices, and above all, of the present low price of articles of universal demand and consumption, in respect of which the grower has the monopoly of the home market, is one of the strangest paradoxes which the wit of man ever devised.

After this retrospect to the remedies proposed for the late distress in the manufacturing and trading districts, it is natural to ask, has the national debt been annihilated? Has the parliament been re-modelled? Has the sinking fund been taken away? Have taxes been repealed? Or, without recurring to any of these ex-

pedients, have the glut and stagnation ceased? Has manufacturing industry recovered? Has public credit been improved? Is private credit flourishing? Is the revenue progressively growing better? Is the population of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the other manufacturing counties fully employed, cheerful, loyal, obedient to the laws, contented and happy? Has their increased ability to provide for their wants led to an increase of consumption, and is increasing consumption every day operating to relieve us from the excess of raw produce which now gluts our markets?

This is not mere theory or speculation. The proofs of this happy change are to be found in facts and figures, which cannot deceive, though the honourable and learned gentleman, in talking of consumption and revenue, hinted an opinion, that the increase could not be real; for which, however, he could state no better reason than this, that it did not accord with his preconceived theory, or his preconceived appeal to the feelings of the suffering part of the community. Better and more just would have been the application of his eloquence had he said to the landed interest, "In the present contented and improved condition of these populous districts, in the diminution of crime and misery, in the ease with which the laws are administered, in the security and peace which the manufacturers now enjoy, in their growing prosperity, and in the cessation of all the anxiety, expense and danger which attended their former state, there is something which has a tendency to compensate to your better feelings, at least, for the depression under which you now labour; and be assured, the improved condition of these classes, and their augmented means of consumption, are the sure harbingers of an improvement in your own situation."

The temporary calamities brought upon the country by the late stagnation of our manufactures, have been attended with this good effect:—that, in seeking for remedies, the public mind of the country, and the mind of parliament, have been turned to the merits of what has been called our mercantile system, with its balance of trade, its balance of prohibitions and protections, and checks and bounties, and all the complicated and confused machinery by which the interests of commerce have been impeded instead of being promoted: that in both Houses of parliament we have had committees to investigate the merits of that system, and that the result of their inquiries, aided by discussions out of doors, has been the diffusion of more liberal and enlightened views upon these important points. Already we have seen the fruits of these researches in the measures proposed last session by the Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Trade,* for the gradual relaxation

* Mr. Wallace.

of this system of restraint :—a relaxation which, besides its immediate benefits, in multiplying the enjoyments and extending the intercourse of civilized society, would be attended with the future advantage of abating those grounds of national jealousies and irritation which have too frequently arisen between this and other states on commercial questions—of leading us and them to form a juster estimate of those causes of hostility which, during the last century, were too often engendered by those jealousies and irritations, and thereby (co-operating with the general progress of knowledge, and the increasing control which public opinion exercises over the conduct even of despotic governments) to render that greatest of all calamities, war, less frequent in the world.

In like manner there is reason to hope, that the difficulties of the present time have tended, through the investigation in parliament and discussions out of doors, and will still further conduce, to remove many of the prejudices and errors which have existed on the subject of the Corn Laws. The ultimate result, he trusted, would be such an alteration in those laws as would protect both the grower and the consumer from the evils to which they are alternately liable under the present system.

If it can now no longer be denied, that the manufacturing distress of the years 1816 and 1817 was produced by previous overtrading, combined with the altered value of the currency; it remains to be seen, whether causes, in a great degree similar, have not mainly contributed to the present depression of our agriculture. The excess of supply in all the principal markets proves the redundancy of produce; and that redundancy, together with the improved value of money, is quite sufficient to account for the present low prices. That this superabundant production is of our own growth is also undeniable. To this state the country has been gradually approaching for many years. At the breaking out of the war in 1793, our average growth of corn was certainly below our consumption. The waste of war, the great purchases of government, and the difficulties which a state of hostility threw in the way of the foreign supply, by enhancing the price of imported corn, gave the first stimulus to an extension of our own cultivation. That stimulus was greatly aided by the bad harvests which preceded the first stoppage of the Bank in 1797, and by the still more deficient crops which followed that event, in 1799 and 1800. Before the latter period the diminishing value of money, consequent upon the restriction of cash payments, afforded great additional encouragement and facility to the ardent spirit of speculation which natural causes had already created in agriculture. This artificial excitement continued to operate so long

as the value of money continued to decrease, that is, till the conclusion of the war.

That excessive speculation is one of the concomitant evils of any system which rapidly lowers the value of money, is an undeniable proposition. In what manner this effect is produced by depreciation is a question which may be passed over in this discussion; but its consequences may be traced in the present glut of produce. It is the cumulative result of the facility with which money or credit was procured to bring barren tracts into cultivation, and to draw a greater produce from lands previously cultivated. If in both these pursuits speculation has been carried too far, the consequences must be the same as in over-manufacturing and over-trading—to the speculators a loss—to the consumers, the temporary benefit of prices lower than those at which their wants can be permanently supplied—that the latter will be able to consume somewhat more, and the former disabled or deterred from producing as much as heretofore, until the supply adjusts itself to the demand. There is, however, in this respect, one material difference between manufactures and agriculture greatly to the disadvantage of the latter. Capitals embarked in the cultivation of the soil are more slow in producing the expected returns, and cannot so easily be withdrawn, or turned into some other channel of employment. Should the seasons continue favourable, the glut in agriculture, therefore, may be of longer duration than in other branches of our national industry, and the more so, as it is an excess no part of which is likely to find a vent in exportation.

If no alteration had been made in our corn trade with Ireland, probably the pressure of this glut might never have been felt, or felt only in a very slight degree, by the English grower. He did not anticipate the immense change which had been produced by the law of 1806. His improvements proceeded upon calculations which did not allow for the prolific powers of the more fertile soils of Ireland. He did not foresee that by the time those expensive improvements would be in their full bearing, we should be furnished with an annual supply from that country, exceeding the average import of foreign corn from all parts of the world before the introduction of that law. This, however, is the fact. The present depression is the result of the competition created by an excess in both countries—a competition the more severely felt by both, as they have to struggle at the same time with the increased value of money.

The corn bill of 1815, however well intended, has certainly contributed to aggravate the present distress. It was passed under an impression of the inability of this country to raise corn enough for its own consumption. The effect of that impression was a

pretty general belief, confirmed by the decided opinions of great authorities who opposed the bill in both Houses of parliament, that the import price of eighty shillings a quarter would thenceforward be the *minimum* price of wheat in England. The consequence was, that prospective calculations, either of improvement, or for the letting of land, were formed very much upon these assumptions; and as the import price was stated to be the lowest price, which, according to the doctrine of that day, would remunerate the British grower, it was considered that up to eighty shillings remuneration was secured, and all above it would be profit. The calculation would not have been disappointed, had the *data* been correct, but the country was then rapidly advancing to a state in which its produce would exceed its consumption; and the erroneous consequences of this calculation, joined to two or three productive harvests, have led to the present depression.

If any man can doubt that excessive production has materially contributed to the fall of prices, let him compare the quantity of corn sent for sale to Mark-lane, and to every other principal market in the kingdom, for the last twelve, and still more for the last six months, with the quantity sent at any former periods of corresponding duration. Low price might be the effect of the increased value of money unaided by other causes; but increased quantity does not depend upon the alteration in the currency. A constantly overwhelming supply, concomitant with an increased consumption (and both these facts admit of positive proof), kept up for a considerable period, can only be the effect of redundancy. It is true that the supply may lately have been somewhat accelerated by the poverty of many of the farmers. This may have been the case for a few months after the harvest. But the average quantity for a whole year cannot be influenced by this temporary cause. It can only be explained by a general excess of production, of the extent of which some idea may be formed from the fact, that the whole supply in Mark-lane, for the last year, has exceeded by nearly one-third the supply of the year preceding, and that in the last quarter the quantity has been very nearly double that of the quantity in the corresponding period of the last year. This excess of production has been the subject of much idle declamation at meetings out of doors. It has been said, "who ever heard of plenty as an evil, or of a people brought to the brink of ruin by abundance?" Plenty has never been described as an abstract or general evil, or the whole nation as distressed by abundance. The possession of this blessing brings with it innumerable comforts and advantages to the consumer. Cheapness is the effect of plenty, and if that cheapness be now in part at the expense of the grower, is he to repine at the bounty of Providence, because it is the natural order of things that his speculation,

like all others, is liable to temporary excess and derangement?— or if not privileged against the course of nature, is he alone to be indemnified at the expense of the community, against the occasional contingencies in a great degree brought upon himself by the effect of those very corn laws to which he has resorted for his own special protection? Can a provident legislature yield to such an expectation? Will it not rather say to the agriculturist, as to any other speculator, “whatever we may feel for your disappointment, every man must abide the event of his own calculations.”

If, however, upon some mistaken principle, a positive monopoly of the corn market is habitually to be preserved to the British grower, and the people to be precluded from resorting to foreign supply, except occasionally to guard themselves against existing dearth, then, indeed, it may be a question, whether for the interest of the people themselves, the inconveniences of this vicious system, alternately visiting the grower and the consumer, may not in some degree be palliated by other artificial expedients, though in principle scarcely less objectionable than the system itself. If the tendency of excess, in working its own cure, be to produce deficiency; and if both excess and deficiency be liable to be aggravated by the fluctuations of the seasons, it may be deserving of consideration, whether, in the present state of our corn laws, some remedy for the former, and some guard against the latter, may not be found in the plan of a bounty upon the warehousing of British corn, suggested by the noble marquis, when the markets should be glutted, and corn below a certain price. A moderate sacrifice for this purpose may perhaps tend to prevent extreme depression at one time, and extreme dearth at another; and by the latter advantage compensate to the consumer in seasons of scarcity, the benefit conferred upon the grower in seasons of redundancy. A bounty of this description would be more fair, in reference to the different classes of the community, as well as less expensive to the state, than the old system of a bounty upon exportation; but still it is a measure which, if possible, should be avoided. It will be for the House hereafter to consider, whether it be not a wiser course to revise a defective law, by getting rid of its acknowledged evils, rather than to leave them in full operation, for the chance or expectation of trying how far they can be obviated by a counteracting expedient; of which the best that can be said is, that if we are to continue to labour under the disease, that expedient may possibly prove, if not an antidote, at least a palliative, of some of its worst consequences.

Before he proceeded to offer a few remarks on the state of the Currency, as connected with the present distress, he felt it necessary to advert to the honourable and learned gentleman's griev-

ance, that he had not been placed upon the Bank Committee of 1819. From the moving accents and subdued tone, in which the honourable and learned gentleman complained of the refusal which he had met with on that occasion, he felt, if not compassion for the honourable and learned gentleman's disappointment, at least regret for the omission of his name; especially when he mysteriously hinted, that, had he been upon that committee, all the inconveniences and pressure which have resulted from the resumption of cash payments might have been greatly palliated, if not altogether avoided. After this declaration, he had listened with more than ordinary attention to all that had fallen from the honourable and learned gentleman, expecting every moment the solution of this mysterious intimation, and to find himself, and those who laboured with him in the committee, overwhelmed with compunction for having ventured upon a Report, without the benefit of the honourable and learned gentleman's counsel and assistance. But, after many circumlocutions, the only light which the honourable and learned gentleman had thrown upon the subject was this, "that the evil, after all, was the departing from the standard in 1797." Wonderful discovery! What an Iliad of woes might have been saved to this country, if those words, instead of escaping from the lips of the honourable and learned member in 1822, could have found vent in 1819!

But when the honourable and learned member did at last come forward, at the twelfth hour, with his marvellous proposition, not more astounding from its immediate practical importance, than new as a discovery, he seemed conscious that a heavy responsibility might be cast upon him, on the score of public duty, for having kept the secret so long in his own bosom. He felt that it might have been divulged, if not to the Committee up stairs, at least to the House during the discussion of the Report, and the measures grounded upon it in 1819. He therefore very properly protected himself from this reproach, by reminding us, that he was prevented by illness from attending the House during those proceedings. The future philosopher, in reading the history of these eventful times, may find in this misfortune, as in the original stoppage of the Bank, a proof how much the misery or happiness of nations turns upon some accident not much noticed at the time, because its influence for good or evil is not then foreseen. For ourselves of the present day, we may deplore the tardiness of the honourable and learned gentleman in promulgating his discovery; but that feeling will now be as unavailing to relieve the distresses of the country, as the regret with which we have heard of that most inopportune illness, by the effect of which we were unfortunately deprived of that discovery at the critical of 1819.

In the honourable and learned gentleman's view of the causes of our present difficulties, it suits his purpose to lay great stress upon the fluctuations of the currency, and he has given us many calculations, not very new, to show the extent of the depreciation at different periods. To prove that during a great part of the war the currency was really depreciated is now become unnecessary. The fact is admitted, and the arguments and principles of those who contended for it in 1810, are no longer controverted. But it is rather curious that the new converts, those who stoutly denied depreciation when it most glaringly existed, should now be the most strenuous to exaggerate the extent to which it was then carried. When gold was at 5*l.* an ounce, the mortgagee, the annuitant, the public creditor, were told that they had nothing to complain of; and now they are told by the same parties, that they are only entitled to three-fourths of their nominal claims; and for this curious reason, that they are at last relieved from the loss which they sustained, for many years, from having been paid their incomes in money depreciated twenty-five per cent. But this is an exaggerated statement of their loss. There can be no other measure of their loss from depreciation, than the excess of the market above the standard or coinage price of gold, and if this be taken as the measure, the average of the whole period between 1797 and 1819 would not amount to near twenty-five per cent. It did not exceed five, as has been justly observed by the honourable member for Portarlington,* at the date of Mr. Peel's bill. But then we must not confound *depreciation* with a *diminution* in the value of money. Quite independent of natural causes, such as an increased supply of the precious metals, there may be a diminution in the value of money, and to a considerable extent, without its being depreciated; and, in like manner, its value may increase without any alteration in the standard. Every contrivance which tends to economize the use of the precious metals, or to provide a substitute for them in the shape of voluntary credit, tends to diminish the value of money. A diminution of value from these causes, involving no injustice to any one, is attended with great benefits to the community. Much of the prosperity of England, since the beginning of the late reign, may be ascribed to the legitimate contrivances, by which this diminution was gradually effected and extended, in all the various modes of verbal, book, and circulating credits. This is one of the advantages of accumulating wealth, of stable institutions, and provident laws, affording a high degree of security to property in all its various modifications.

But this diminution in the value of money could not be in pro-

* Mr. Ricardo.

gress in one country, without its being more or less felt by all; not only in proportion as other countries could avail themselves of the same means of credit and economy in the use of the precious metals, but also because, in proportion to the gradual extension of those means in any particular country, is that country enabled to dispense with a part of its metallic currency, which, diffusing itself over the circulation of the remainder of the world, tends everywhere to lower the value of gold and silver in relation to all other commodities.

This may appear abstruse, but it is important to the understanding of the present subject. Before the Bank restriction, England had done much to economize the use of coin; Scotland still more, and Ireland far less than England. In Ireland, gold was the principal medium of payments. In Scotland, where notes as low as one pound had long been in use, it entered for very little into the pecuniary transactions of the country. In England it still formed a considerable part of our circulation, there being then no circulating paper under five, and only to a small extent, under ten pounds. The first effect of the restriction was, to add to the paper circulation by enlarged issues, not only from the national banks of England and Ireland, but also from all the country banks. This addition continued gradually to increase, and especially in the notes under five pounds. Every increase for the first two or three years was a *diminution* in the value of money, but not a *depreciation*. Why? Because the gold left the country, as the paper became its substitute, and by this process, the exchanges were kept at or near *par*. The effect of this exportation of our coin was everywhere to lower the value of money, and by so doing, to keep it upon a level with its diminished value in this country.

In the progress of this operation the United Kingdom was drained of all its gold. There would, however, have been no real depreciation of the paper substituted in its stead, if, by imposing proper limits upon the issues of that paper, the *par* of exchange with foreign countries (which is necessarily equivalent with the standard of the gold coin in this country) had been made the criterion of its value. But the issues of paper not being confined within those limits, depreciation took place.

The consequence, therefore, of the Bank restriction was twofold;—first, a diminution in the value of money generally, but without depreciation; and secondly, a depreciation specially superadded in this country, the degree of which at any particular period was the difference between the standard and the market-price of gold. By the first result, the price of commodities, including of course all the raw productions of the soil, was raised generally. By the second, this general rise of prices was carried

still further in this country, in proportion to the depreciation. The actual depreciation, therefore, as it was not the sole cause of the rise of prices (speaking now of that rise only in as far as it was influenced by changes in the value of money) during the war, so it cannot be taken as the measure of the fall of prices since 1819, unless we could have got rid of the depreciation without recalling into our own use a part of the gold which had been exported, or in any degree diminishing the extent in which credit had become a substitute for actual payments. That fall must be still greater, if, instead of importing gold for circulation here, the greatest part of it has been withdrawn from circulation in other countries, to be buried in the vaults and cellars of the Bank. The proportion of the rise of prices generally during the war, and of fall since the peace, not in England only, but in all other countries, from these alternate operations, may be difficult to estimate; but it must be considerable; and the more so, as other countries, as well as England, had also a depreciated paper, and have since endeavoured to replace it by a metallic currency.

But even diminution in the value of money, without depreciation, and afterwards depreciation superadded, do not afford a just measure of the actual rise of prices, and especially of the rent of land in this country during the war. To these causes must be added the effect of excessive speculation. It is true that this excessive speculation had its foundation in the diminishing value of money; but when the farmer had saved a few thousand pounds, was it not natural that he should wish to lay out his capital in the purchase of land,—that land upon which he had realized an independence, and of which the rent and fee simple had at least doubled within his recollection? For the same reason, was it not natural that the landlord should grasp at every opportunity of adding to the number of his acres; and that he again should be met in competition by the land-jobber, ready to adventure his capital in the same market, as affording the best prospect of assured future profit? In this state of general delusion, was it surprising that tenants were ready to embark in improvements and to take leases not founded upon the calculation even of existing prices, but in the sanguine hope of prospective profits, to be realized by a future rise before the end of their respective terms? And what was the state of the money market whilst all this speculation was going on? With depreciation guaranteed by law, the country banks had every facility to lend; the farmer, the land-owner, the jobber, every temptation to borrow. Can we wonder at the extent of the revulsion? If we are unable to rescue many of its victims from the ruin which it has brought upon them, at least let it be a warning never to be forgotten, against any future tampering with the standard value of the currency.

But, has nothing been omitted which was within our power, to mitigate the pressure arising from the restoration of our currency? If the view and the principles which he had now submitted be correct, he must say, that every thing which might have been done, had not been done, for that purpose. Looking with apprehension to the difficulty of reverting to a metallic currency, he had stated his suggestions more fully in the Bank committee. They did not differ very materially from those of the honourable member for Portarlington. It was his (Mr. Huskisson's) wish that we should have a gold coin, as a medium of small payments in the common ready-money dealings of the community, instead of the one-pound notes of the Bank of England; and for reasons with which he would not trouble the House, he recommended that there should be a small *seignorage* taken upon that coin, as there is upon the silver, at least equal to the expense of coinage. The amount of such a coin requisite for the purposes which he had described would not be considerable, at the most seven or eight millions; as it was no part of his plan to interfere with the circulation of country banks, except by such regulations and encouragement as might conduce to their increased stability and security. Beyond that amount of seven or eight millions, gold could be of no use in this country as coin, and the only other purpose for which it could be wanted was, as a check and regulator to maintain the standard of the currency. That standard, he agreed with the honourable member for Portarlington, would be most perfectly secured by the Bank paying its notes, not in coin, but in gold bullion at the price of 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* an ounce. The quantity requisite for this purpose, he also agreed with him, being only the amount requisite to balance the occasional fluctuations of the exchange, need not be large;—an amount very considerably less than that which he apprehended was now hoarded by the Bank.

Had this principle been acted upon, the foreign exchanges could not have been for more than two years constantly and greatly in favour of this country,—a proof, as is observed in the Report of the Agricultural Committee, that the value of money here has been kept artificially above the *par* of the increased value of the money of other countries; for there is nothing which, in the natural state of things, finds its level with more celerity and ease than the course of exchanges between different countries. He was therefore warranted in concluding, that the pressure had been accelerated by the mode, and aggravated by the extent, of preparations made for giving effect to the Act of 1819. He was convinced this would be the case, from the moment the Bank, in year, demanded a repayment from Government of ten mil-

He recollected it was the general opinion of the committee.

It was the opinion of his right honourable friend,* the Chairman of that Committee, and was so stated in his speech when the Report was taken into consideration by the House. It was also the opinion of his noble friend, at the head of the Government,† stated in another place. In saying this, nothing could be further from his thoughts than to cast any reflection upon the conduct of the Bank. A heavy responsibility was imposed upon them, and if, in providing to meet it, they had erred at all, they had done so from an excess of precaution, from an over-anxiety to fulfil the commands of the law:—an error (if committed) into which it is the less surprising the Directors should have fallen, as their interest as a corporation was obviously the other way; and it is natural for men of high honour to arm themselves, sometimes perhaps too scrupulously, against the supposed influence of personal motives in the discharge of a great public duty.

After what he had said, it was scarcely necessary to add, that he viewed with satisfaction the plan mentioned by his noble friend‡ of an issue of four millions of gold from the Bank upon the security of Exchequer bills. He took it as a kind of admission from the Bank, that they had now in their coffers gold, at least to that amount, more than was necessary, even in their cautious judgment, for protecting the credit of their notes, and, of course, more than was convenient for their own interest to retain. The effect of the operation, as he understood it, would be, to replace the circulation where it would have been, if, instead of a repayment of ten, the Bank had been satisfied with six millions from the public. In that case, their accumulated treasure would probably have been four millions less than it now is—at present they will re-issue to that amount. In whatever degree four millions withdrawn has straitened the circulation and added to the pressure, four millions restored will give relief. Not that he expected that the whole of the gold would remain in this country; he knew it could not, but, by diffusing itself generally, it would everywhere have a tendency to give ease and life to the labouring markets of the world, and by consequence, and at least in the same degree, to our own. What is most urgent is, to stop the progress of depression. That once effected, speculation, which is now in a manner dormant, will revive, and it is in this view, more than by its actual amount, that this operation of the Bank seems to hold out a prospect of reviving confidence and hope.

He could have wished that, instead of being advanced to Government, this sum had been added to the amount of the discounts of the Bank. Such a proceeding would have been more

* Mr. Peel.

† The Earl of Liverpool.

‡ Lord Londonderry.

conformable to the principles and object of that institution. It would not only have kept their issues more under their control, but would have afforded more relief to the public. It would have afforded more relief to the public, because the Bank has no means of increasing their discount to that amount, except by lowering the rate which they now charge for interest, lowering it from five to four, or possibly less, per cent. Why this should not be done, or why they should prefer lending to Government at three per cent. was to him inconceivable. The amount which it was safe and prudent to advance, either to the state or to individuals, was entirely their own consideration; but within that amount, he, as a member of Parliament, had a right to say, that under the present circumstances, discount was their prior duty.

The Government disclaimed the advance as an accommodation for the service of the year, and he was glad they did so; but they were willing to use it as the means of getting the sum into circulation, and in the hope of affording some relaxation to the existing pressure. The Bank is the public banker; but this was not the primary object of its institution. That object was, and ought to be, to facilitate the operations of commerce and industry, by extending mercantile credit; and how was that to be extended except by liberal discounts? For this purpose, extensive, and important, and exclusive privileges are given to the Bank, whilst all other bankers are placed under restrictions. These privileges were given in the expectation that the Bank, by keeping their rate of discount rather under the market rate, would tend to lower the latter, and to make the loans of money cheaper here than in other parts of the world. But how is this object to be attained if the Bank refuse to discount except at a rate higher than the market interest of money? If they are to keep the rate of discount at five per cent., whilst the banks of other states, Hamburgh, Amsterdam and Paris, are discounting at three, or at the utmost four per cent., the tables will be turned against us; commerce will find cheaper accommodation elsewhere, and the privileges of the Bank will only be felt by the industry and trade of this country as tending to uphold (as far as such privileges can uphold), instead of tending to lower, the rate of interest upon money. He could not, therefore, too strongly state his opinion, that the Directors of the Bank would best consult the character and interest of that institution, as well as the public interest, by lowering the rate of discounts in whatever proportion it may be necessary, in order to draw to themselves at least as much demand for that accommodation as it would, in their judgment, be safe for them to grant.

The next great head of this extensive subject, adverted to in the speech of the honourable and learned gentleman, was *Taxation*, to the extent of which he ascribed mainly, if not exclusively,

the present agricultural distress. This conclusion the honourable and learned member had attempted to support by some of the most visionary doctrines of political economy which he had ever heard, at least from a person of the honourable and learned gentleman's acknowledged talents and ingenuity. Among other positions equally extraordinary, the honourable and learned member had stated, "as a known and acknowledged axiom of political economy, as old as the science itself, that one effect of taxation was, to raise prices by increasing the profits of capital." Now, this principle he must own was new to him, and belonged, he should say, to that class of axioms which, a few years ago, set up the ideal unit, or the abstract pound sterling, as the real standard of our currency; axioms which, to his mind at least, had the merit of being unintelligible. He should like to know what the honourable member for Portarlington had to say to this axiom? He had always thought, that one of the evils of taxation was, that it *diminished* the profits of capital; but if it *increase* profits, how can it produce this effect without increasing the powers of employing industry, without increasing the means of consumption and enjoyment, without adding to the accumulated wealth of the country? And yet, this is one of the axioms by the aid of which the honourable and learned gentleman endeavours to connect, as cause and effect, the amount of our taxation with the public distress.

Another axiom of the honourable and learned gentleman equally fallacious is, that prices are raised to the consumer by the employment of great capitals, and that taxation renders such great capitals necessary. If he had said that, without a great extent of capital in a country, there could be no great extent of taxation, he could have understood him; but instead of great fixed capitals raising the price of manufactured commodities, their tendency was directly the reverse. It was by this extent of wealth, and by all the mechanical and chemical improvements which science suggested, but which capital alone could turn to the greatest practical advantage, that the natural effect of taxation in raising prices was in some degree counteracted; and that England was enabled to manufacture cheaper than any other country in the world. This advantage enabled the industrious classes in this country to provide themselves with many of the comforts of life, in clothing, hardware, and other articles, not only cheaper than they could be had in other countries, but cheaper than they were in this country at a time when the public burthens were much less in their amount. This is the case with cotton clothing, with coarse woollens, and with iron goods, articles of no small consumption by the agricultural classes of the community.

Differing, therefore, with these doctrines of the honourable and

learned gentleman respecting taxation, he was at the same time anxious that his own principles should not be misunderstood. Those principles might be found in the Agricultural Report of last year. To some of the propositions and inferences of that Report he could only give a qualified concurrence; but upon this topic, it had his entire assent. He was ready to say now, as he said then, that "taxes, however imposed, must necessarily abridge the resources and comforts of those by whom they are ultimately paid, and that the general amount and real pressure of taxation have been positively increased in proportion to the improved value of the currency."

In one principle stated by the honourable and learned gentleman, he agreed; namely, "that it was the total amount more than the mode of levying the taxes that ought to be considered." But if he agreed with him in this general remark, he must add, that the honourable and learned gentleman had fallen into a strange inconsistency; for a great part of his speech had been an attempt to prove that the malt tax, and most of the productive taxes in the collection of the excise, were paid by the occupiers of the land. As well might he argue, that the tax upon sugar was paid by the West-India planter, and that upon tea by the Chinese. In truth, all these taxes fall in the first instance upon the consumer, and are ultimately borne either by the profits of capital, or sometimes by the capital itself, belonging to all the subjects of the state, and must operate in diminution either of the one or of the other. A remission of taxes, therefore, must be a benefit to all, and not exclusively to any particular class.

The immediate cause of the distress of the farmer is the great depression of his market, creating a difference of one-third, at the least, between the nominal value of his whole stock in business now, compared with that nominal value a few years ago. In this state of things, let us suppose that taxes to a large amount are taken off. The effect will be, we are told, a further fall in prices. Be it so. What will be the consequence to the tenant, whose stock in business is already diminished in value one-third? Why, that it will be diminished one-half. Now, in the case of many tenants, at least one-half of the capitals with which they began business, was money borrowed. To a man in that situation, what sort of relief should you give? With a new tenant who now takes to the concern and provides his stock in business with a money capital, only one-half of that which was requisite to his predecessor, the case is different. The fall of prices, produced by the remission of taxes, involving too the fall of rent, will be to him anything but a disadvantage. It will be a boon to him, as it will be to capitalists, under similar circumstances, in other branches of industry. This appeared to him the fair distinction. The remis-

nion of taxation will be no immediate remedy to a distress directly arising from low prices;—but in whatever degree it can be effected, it will ultimately be a benefit to the agricultural, as well as to all the other interests of the country.

The honourable and learned gentleman has gone into minute details to show that taxation diminishes consumption. Here again the general principle may be admitted. But has there been any marked diminution of consumption, peculiarly coincident with the present distress? On the contrary, has not consumption increased, and is it not now increasing in all articles of general use, even those subject to heavy duties of excise? If taxation, therefore, be the immediate cause of the present difficulties, whence comes it that the taxes complained of as peculiarly pressing upon agriculture, are more than usually productive? We are agreed as to the existence and character of the distress. It rests, therefore, with the honourable and learned gentleman, either to contend, that distress increases consumption, or to admit (contrary to the whole drift of his speech), that the particular taxes which he has mentioned,—malt, soap, candles, &c., do not fall either exclusively or extensively upon the distressed classes; and if they do not, it follows that the remission of those taxes would do nothing specifically for the immediate relief of agriculture.

The honourable and learned gentleman has shown that the increased consumption of malt has not kept pace with the increase of our population. But when he ascribes this circumstance exclusively to the increase of the tax on this article, he might have shown, had it equally suited his purpose, that increase or diminution in the annual consumption of this article has not corresponded with the augmentation or abatement of the tax. In 1816, the tax was reduced from 4s. 4d. to 2s. 4d. a bushel—the consumption of 1817 was 17,136,020 bushels; that of 1818, 26,462,933; that of 1819, 22,346,259; making an average of the three years of 21,981,737 bushels. In 1819, the duty was again raised to 3s. 6d. per bushel; the consumption of 1820 was 24,535,155; of 1821, 28,697,057 bushels, giving an average for the two years of 26,616,106 bushels, and exceeding the average of the three years of low duty by 4,634,369 bushels. If upon a comparison of thirty years the increase in the consumption of malt has not kept pace with the increase of the population—without denying that the tax has contributed its share to the falling off—it may in part probably be ascribed to other causes—to improvements in the art of brewing, by which a saving of malt is effected—a saving, which he understood, was still greater in the distillery—also he was willing to hope, in part to a melioration in the habits of the people; at least he was glad to see that the consumption of soap, and other exciseable articles connected with the comforts of the indus-

trious classes, had increased, within the same period, in a proportion greater even than the increase of population; for he knew no more certain indication of sobriety than increased cleanliness and an improvement in the domestic manners of the community.

From whatever causes, however, the increase in the consumption of malt had not kept pace with the growth of the population, upon a comparison of the present period with the year 1792; it would be a fairer mode of inquiry, in reference to the effect of taxation, to make the comparison not upon malt only, but upon all the articles of general consumption which are liable to heavy duties of excise. This comparison, embracing some articles upon which the increase of taxation has been much more rapid and extensive than upon malt (such for instance as tea, mentioned by the noble marquis), would show that, upon an average of the whole, consumption has fully kept pace with the augmented number of our population,

But, oh! exclaims the honourable and learned gentleman, indignant at the mere mention of tea, "this may be very well for the agriculturist in China, but does tea in the smallest degree promote British industry or give employment to any one individual in Great Britain?" Does the honourable and learned gentleman wish us to understand, that the Chinese kindly make us a present of all the tea, and, still more kindly, deliver it free of expense in Leadenhall-street; and that no British industry is put in motion, either to provide the means of procuring this foreign article, or to convey it to the shores of this country? Are we to take this as the honourable and learned gentleman's doctrine, in respect to commerce with foreign states, and as another sample of that political economy which the honourable and learned gentleman has attempted to palm upon the good sense of the House of Commons, but which, in fact, is more worthy of a drunken mob in Palace-yard?

The honourable and learned gentleman has compared the *nominal* amount of the taxes, including the charge of collection, now, and at various periods of the war, in order to show that their *real* amount has not been diminished. "The people pay as much now in the seventh year of peace," he says, "as they did in 1806; aye, even as much as they did in 1813. Was there ever any thing so monstrous? In 1813, eighty-four millions was the gross sum collected, last year it was sixty. The difference is just equivalent to the depreciation of the currency."

The honourable and learned gentleman entered into a similar comparison with the year 1806. No wonder, that for these comparisons it suited the honourable and learned gentleman's purpose to take the average depreciation of the currency at twenty-five cent. But, even if it were true that the average depreciation

had been carried to that extent, we have in these comparisons, the honourable and learned gentleman's implied admission, that agriculture flourished, during the war, with an amount of taxation at least equal to that of the present time. Its present depression, therefore, is not the consequence of taxation. In the next place, what is there so monstrous or so new, that a country which resorts to loans during war, should have to pay the interest of those loans after peace? Was not this the case after the American war? If the honourable and learned gentleman had been in the House in 1789, he might have exclaimed "how monstrous! our revenue is now, in the sixth year of peace, seventeen millions; and in 1781, a year of war, it was only ten millions." He might then have further exclaimed—"a great part of the difference arises from new taxes which did not exist during the war, but which have been imposed in successive years since the peace!" On the other hand, to make his present statement correct, he ought to have added to it—that, "contrary to the practice of all former wars, we had been able to wind up this last, the most protracted and the most expensive of all, not only without any addition to, but with a great remission of, the public burthens."

Whether our expenditure upon the reduced scale stated by the noble marquis, be still too great, is a point reserved for further investigation and discussion; but when the whole charge for the current year is brought under fifty millions, including the extraordinary expenses incident to the insurrection in Ireland, it ought to be a strong presumption with gentlemen on the other side, that, with safety and justice, retrenchment cannot go much further. The honourable member for Essex,* whose absence from indisposition he particularly regretted, had deliberately stated his opinion in 1816, "that fifty millions was the lowest sum to which we could hope to bring our expenditure, and that he did not see how it could be brought so low." No man will question his capacity to investigate these subjects, no man will question his disposition to economy. This is an authority which must have its weight with the other side of the House, and which is justly looked up to by the country; he therefore referred to it with the more confidence, as he was sure it would be a satisfaction to that honourable member to find, that the expenditure was now actually within the estimate which he considered the lowest that could be sufficient.

The honourable and learned gentleman recommends an immediate remission of taxes to the extent of any existing surplus. But he goes further. If the taking off of five millions of taxes should not afford immediate relief—and assuredly it would not—

* Mr. Western.

the next step would be, to apply the remedy of an "unreasoning necessity," as the honourable and learned gentleman describes it; but which, in plain terms, means neither more nor less than a breach of faith with the public creditor. That a nation, like an individual, may be compelled to bend to an absolute uncontrollable necessity, is what cannot be denied; but when the honourable and learned gentleman calmly contemplates a state of things short of that, and attempts to measure and define it by the present difficulties of the country; the continuance of which, he intimated, would come up to his view of an "unreasoning necessity," the proposition is most alarming. Setting aside all considerations of morality, justice, and public honour, is there any man weak enough to believe, that a national bankruptcy would relieve the present distress? blind enough not to see, that it would involve us in general confusion, and weaken, if not destroy, the foundations upon which the security of all other property now rests?

Something has been said of the Public Debt being a mortgage upon all the lands of England. This he would deny. There is no such specific mortgage. The public creditor can show no parchment—produce no deeds. His title is not upon the lands, more than upon the whole capital and income of the country. He derives that title from the same source as that which gives to every other subject of the realm the security in what he possesses—from the guarantee of the public power of the state. What is property itself, but the creature of that public power? Has not the claim of the public creditor the same sanction and pledge of that public power, as the private engagements between man and man, or as the transmission of property by inheritance or by will? Are not all these means of possession created and upheld by law, administered and enjoyed according to law; and can you make an inroad upon any one without endangering the whole? The possessor of an estate which he has inherited or purchased, or the holder of a mortgage upon that estate, has no more natural right, the one to his rent, or the other to his interest, than the public creditor has to his dividend. Titles to property are not like life, or liberty—the gifts of God and nature. If you cancel the security given to one class of property, you endanger the rights of all. Your blow may indeed be aimed at one corner of the edifice only, but its recoil, depend upon it, will damage, perhaps destroy, the foundation of the whole fabric.

With respect to the Sinking Fund, he had no difficulty in avowing, that there could be no real Sinking Fund in time of peace, except the surplus of revenue above expenditure. Nothing else could be deserving of the name. But with such a debt as ours, and without such a Sinking Fund, he should look with disquietude, so much to the immediate interests of the public creditor as

to the security of the state. If parliament proclaim our utter inability to reduce our debt during peace, what can we expect upon the renewal of hostilities, but the annihilation of credit, forcing us either to limit the extraordinary exertions of war within the additional means that can be raised annually by taxation, or to declare a national bankruptcy? Is this the alternative for which the country is prepared? If we had never had a Sinking Fund, it would be one question, whether, at a moment of difficulty like the present, we should, for the first time, make the effort necessary for creating one: it is quite another question, whether, without the most overruling necessity, we ought to give up the Sinking Fund which we already possess; to give it up too in the face of the Resolution of the year 1819, thus exhibiting to the world such a proof of distress and inability, of weakness and vacillation in council, as must lower our station, and destroy our influence, in Europe; and as could not fail, ere long, by inviting aggression, to bring upon us, in increased expense and diminished security, the punishment, even in a pecuniary view, of our own short-sighted and miserable policy. If hitherto, public credit has been to England power and safety, are we to part with it at the moment when all the states in the world are cultivating that source of strength by establishing Sinking Funds for the reduction of their respective debts? In France, the Sinking Fund is greater in proportion to the total amount of debt than in this country; and in America still greater than in France.

But one great authority, hitherto most friendly to a Sinking Fund,* has told us, that we may part with it now, and restore it again some years hence, when the country shall be more prosperous. This appears a weak and dangerous course. If once given up, the Sinking Fund will be gone for ever. Besides, can any man say how soon this country may be driven to the necessity of preparing for war? Would that be a case which we could postpone, because we should have postponed our Sinking Fund? If called upon to vindicate our honour, could we adjourn the demand of satisfaction to some indefinite but more convenient period? If we once adopt this principle, if the feelings of the country be once subdued to it, insults and injuries will certainly not be wanting; but as we should have first parted with the means, so we should soon be without the spirit to avenge them.

That the resources of England, however, are reduced to this extremity, he utterly denied. If in reference to any other great state in Europe, it had been proved to him, that its public credit stood very high—that its revenue was increasing, without any increase of taxes, that its population was increasing in numbers

* Mr. Tierney.

with a rapidity unparalleled in any long-settled country, and that its internal improvements were keeping pace with the growth of its population;—and if, notwithstanding these facts, he had been told, that the real state of that country was desperate and hopeless, he should have mistrusted the accuracy of the assertion. If these be the immediate forerunners of decline, decay, and ruin, what, he might be allowed to ask, are the steady indications of increasing wealth, power, and prosperity?

Not concurring, therefore, in the gloomy view, not dismayed by the mysterious and fearful forebodings of the honourable and learned gentleman, he could not consent, under a pressure which he trusted would be temporary, to break down the best hopes, and to destroy the public credit, of the country. If after all the dangers we had defied, all the difficulties which we had overcome, and all the trials which our fortitude and firmness had met unappalled, during a war of twenty years—if after we had terminated that long struggle in a manner which had raised the name and character of England to a height which no other country ever attained, we were, in a moment of despondency, to dash away, for ever, one of the main resources which have raised us to that proud distinction—a resource which is well described in the conclusion of the Speech from the throne, as “that public credit, in the maintenance of which all the best interests of this kingdom are equally involved, and by a steady adherence to the principles whereof we have attained and can alone expect to preserve our high station amongst the nations of the world,”—he should then make it his earnest entreaty to those with whom he had acted in public life, he should call upon them by the reverence which they felt for the character and memory of Mr. Pitt, and, he might add, by their regard for their own fair fame, not to lend themselves to pull down this monument of our greatness and our strength; and if, unfortunately, the House should resolve that it ought not to be sustained, to leave to other hands the unhallowed task of its demolition.

The motion was agreed to, and the several returns were laid on the table.

MR. WESTERN'S MOTION

RELATIVE TO THE EFFECTS OF THE RESUMPTION OF CASH
PAYMENTS ON THE AGRICULTURE, MANUFACTURES, AND
COMMERCE OF THE COUNTRY.

JUNE 11, 1822.

THIS day Mr. Western, pursuant to notice, called the attention of the House to the effect which the Resumption of Cash Payments by the Bank of England had had in producing the present Agricultural Distress. The honourable gentleman stated in the outset of his address, that his object was to arraign the wisdom, the justice, and the policy of the measure passed in 1819; and he concluded with moving, "That a committee be appointed to consider of the effects produced by the Act of the 59th Geo. III. c. 49, intitled, 'An Act to continue the restrictions contained in several Acts on payments in cash by the Bank of England, until the 1st of May 1823, and to provide for the gradual resumption of such cash payments, and to permit the exportation of gold and silver,' upon the Agriculture, Manufactures, and Commerce, of the united empire, and upon the general condition of the different classes of society."

MR. HUSKISSON rose, and spoke in substance as follows:

The subject which the honourable gentleman has brought under the consideration of the House is one of the greatest magnitude. It involves nothing less than an alteration of that standard of value by which all property is secured, and all pecuniary contracts and dealings measured and ascertained. The course suggested for the attainment of this object, is pregnant with consequences of the most fearful importance. These considerations—the magnitude of the subject, and the alarming consequences to be apprehended from the present motion—will, I trust, be sufficient to induce the House to afford a patient hearing to the discussion, without any personal appeal to their indulgence, even from an individual standing so much in need of it as myself.

I have listened with every attention in my power to the statements and doctrines of the honourable member, during his long and elaborate, but able speech. Some parts of it I have heard with surprise; other parts, I must candidly confess, with regret;—surprise, at the view which he has taken of the subject, and the extraordinary positions which he has laboured to establish;—regret, at some of his inferences and suggestions, which appeared

to be incompatible with every principle, not only of private right and individual justice, but of public honour and national faith: although I feel perfectly assured, that, in all the relations of public or private life, there is no man more incapable of countenancing any wrong-doing than the honourable member for Essex.

It was my lot, Sir, to be a member of the House of Commons, in the year 1797, when cash payments were, for the first time, suspended. I have continued to enjoy the honour of a seat in this House for the long series of years which have since elapsed. During that period I have not been an inattentive observer of the proceedings in Parliament, and of the effect of those proceedings, in respect to the Currency. In my opinions upon this subject, it was my misfortune, in 1810, to differ from some distinguished members of this House to whom I was personally attached, and in whose political views I had generally concurred; but, having formed those opinions deliberately and conscientiously, I could not honestly withhold them from the public. I shall not at present advert more particularly to those differences, or to the measures adopted by this House after the Report of the Bullion Committee; but I own that if I had been uninformed of all that had passed on this subject since the suspension, I should have inferred from the speech of the honourable gentleman, this evening, that it had been something of this sort:—first, that the liability of the Bank to pay all its notes on demand in the legal coin of the realm having been suspended in 1797, a difference had ensued between the nominal value of those notes and the real value of the coin which they purported to represent:—and secondly, that this difference had been acknowledged by the legislature, and acted upon by the public;—that it had been allowed and compensated for in the adjustment of all pecuniary contracts made prior to the suspension;—that all dealings since had been made in reference to that difference; and, consequently, that it was a difference, which, however fluctuating in its degree, was at any time capable of being ascertained by exact measurement, and set right by specific adjustment.

I should further have been led to infer, from the reasoning and statements of the honourable member, that at some period of this long suspension (perhaps about 1811, when the difference between the nominal value of the paper and the real value of the coin was very considerable), an attempt had been made in Parliament to prevent that difference from being any longer acted upon in the adjustment of pecuniary contracts; and that, for this purpose, it had been proposed to enact, that all such contracts should be satisfied by a tender of bank notes at their nominal value, and to inflict penalties upon any one who paid a guinea for more, or a bank note for less, than its denominative amount. But

I should have felt quite sure, that this attempt, whenever made, had been rejected with scorn and indignation by the House, and particularly by the landed interest:—that the leading members of that interest had vied with each other in denouncing the iniquity of a proposal calculated to defeat the just claims of age and infancy—to rob a parent of a part of that dower which had been allotted to her, in the old standard of the realm, long before the suspension of cash payments—to defraud orphan brothers and sisters of a considerable portion of those fortunes, which the will or marriage settlement of their father had assigned for their education, and maintenance in the world—or, if there were no widows to be curtailed of a part of their jointures—no orphans to be stript of a share of their inheritance—was there no unfortunate mortgagee (possibly a near relation or friend) to be deprived of a part of that interest which he had stipulated to receive in the same standard of value in which he had advanced the money for his mortgage? What! could it be expected that the great land-owners would suffer such a proposal as this to be entertained, doing such violence to their love of justice, so offensive to their best feelings as men, at a moment, too, when they were conscious that their estates, whether liable to the portions of younger children, or charged with dower, or incumbered with mortgage, had doubled in rent since the commencement of the suspension?—and, if their personal feelings revolted at a suggestion which was calculated to injure those who were near and dear to them, their public feelings were surely equally repugnant to the idea of a measure not less fraught with injustice, and calculated to blight our national character, in the case of the public creditor.

This is the inference which, in ignorance of all that had really taken place, I should have drawn from the general tenor of the honourable member's speech; but it would even have led me one step further: I should also have imagined, that the ancient standard of value being now again restored, some of those same creditors who had been so equitably dealt with during the departure from it, were at this moment enforcing the higher nominal payments which they had received during the depreciation; and that the honourable member had come forward this evening, very properly, to claim the interposition of the House against such an unfair demand on their part.

But, Sir, instead of this having been the real state of things, what is the course which has been pursued since the suspension of cash payments? Did the legislature recognize a difference between paper and coin? Were pecuniary transactions adjusted with a reference to that difference? Were dealings entered into, or contracts made, under stipulations founded on that difference? Did not the law, on the contrary, compel every creditor, whether

public or private, whether his contract was prior or subsequent to the restriction, to accept payment in bank-notes, according to their denominative value? Did not that same law prohibit him, under severe penalties, from having reference to any other than the nominal value of the currency in the adjustment of any pecuniary transactions, either retrospective or prospective?

If these were the regulations in force during the depreciation, what is proposed now that money is restored to its former value? Why, that having had hitherto one measure of justice for the creditor, we should now have another measure of justice for the debtor:—that the latter having been protected by one law in paying according to the nominal value, when that value was less than the standard in which he had contracted, he should now—and for no other reason than because that standard is restored—be protected by another law in paying less than that nominal value? It is no sufficient answer to state, “that most of the pecuniary contracts now in force have been entered into since the year 1797, and that they were contracted in a depreciated currency.” Be it so, for the sake of argument. But then all contracts prior to 1797 have been liquidated in that same currency. By what rule of right can you allow for its depreciation in the one case, and not in the other? By what designation would any impartial man describe that equity which should grant an abatement of interest upon the debt of 1811, and refuse a compensation for interest paid short upon a debt prior to 1797?

This, however, is the new principle of equity which the speech of the honourable member inculcates, and which it is the object of his present motion to establish, as a remedy for all the injustice of depreciation, and all the evils which now press upon the country. He has taken a distinction between the interference of the State to decrease, or to increase, by artificial means, the denominative value of money—and what is that distinction? Is the one course more moral or more just than the other? This, indeed, is not the position of the honourable member—but that it is politically more expedient. A constantly progressive depreciation of money, is, according to the doctrines of the honourable member, the great secret of public prosperity. This is no new theory. He only proposes to revive the Scheme of the famous Mr. Law in a more mitigated shape. If once adopted by any country, it must end, as his scheme ended. You may retard its progress to maturity, but you cannot perpetuate the delusion. You must either retrace your steps, or the bubble must burst at last. This was the fate of Law's scheme, as it must be of any project founded on the principle now recommended to the House. During the existence of that scheme, what country was apparently so prosperous as France, what financier so popular as Mr. Law? exultingly

mentioned by a French political writer of that day, in the following terms, "a minister far above all the past age has known, that the present can conceive, or that the future will believe." Mr. Law, it is true, outlived his popularity and his scheme.* He brought distress and ruin upon thousands, and died, himself, in misery and want. The more wary theorists of the present day might prolong the duration of artificial excitement, but they could not prevent the final decay and overthrow of the system. There is no escape from this result in any country that has, through inadvertency or a temporary necessity, once lost sight of a fixed standard of value, except by its restoration.

This restoration, I know, cannot be effected without pressure and difficulty. But I cannot admit the justice of the distinction which the honourable member has taken between the loss to the land-owner by an increase in the value of money, and the loss to his creditor by its decrease. The honourable gentleman's illustration was this, "By decreasing the value of money to one-half," he said, "you reduce the creditor of 500*l.* a year to 250*l.*, and again by decreasing that sum to one-half, to 125*l.*, but still he is left with some income. Now, on the other hand, a man who purchased an estate having a rental of 1,000*l.* a year, when the value of money was decreased one-half, is reduced to nothing if money is restored to its former value, and the purchaser has to pay 500*l.* a year out of the estate."

Passing by, for the present, the right of any government in which the nature of property is understood, and the principles of justice respected, artificially to raise or lower the standard of value, let us examine a little more closely this practical illustration. Let me for a moment reverse the *data* of the honourable member's comparison, which, ingeniously enough for his purpose, assumes the land-owner to be in debt, and the moneyed man without any similar demand against his income. Let me suppose on the one side, a land-owner with an estate unencumbered, and his

* Law concluded the chequered course of his life at Venice, where he died in a state but little removed from indigence, on the 21st of March 1720, in the fifty-eighth year of his age; and he lies buried in one of the churches of that city, where a monument to his memory is still to be seen. The following epitaph appeared soon afterwards:

"Ci gît cet Ecossois célèbre,
Ce calculateur sans égal,
Qui, par les règles de l'algèbre,
A mis la France à l'Hôpital."

"C'était," says Montesquieu, "le même homme, toujours l'esprit occupé de projets, toujours la tête remplie de calculs et de valeurs numériques ou représentatives. Il jouait souvent, et assez gros jeu, quoivue sa fortune fût fort mince."

rent doubled from 500*l.* to 1,000*l.* a year during the depreciation; and on the other, a moneyed man, who, with 500*l.* a year in the three per cents., purchased at 90*l.*, had borrowed one-half of the purchase money, and found himself compelled to repay it when the price had fallen to 50*l.*;—or, to come still nearer to the honourable gentleman's comparison, take the case of an income of 1,000*l.* a year, liable to an obligation to pay abroad an annuity stipulated for in some foreign currency. If that annuity had been satisfied with 500*l.* when the exchange with such foreign country was at par, it would have required the whole income, when by depreciating our money one-half, the same exchange was turned in that proportion against us.

But I must protest against this description of argument altogether. The price of land may rise or fall from natural causes, as may the price of commodities. Every holder of the one or the other is liable to such fluctuations; but that which is the common and fixed measure of all price is not to be tampered with and adjusted, to countervail these fluctuations. In this country, where gold is the standard of value, what is it which the parties stipulate for, and the State guaranties, in every contract for a money payment? Why, that the sum tendered, in satisfaction of such payment, shall not be less in weight and fineness than is required by the standard; but the contract does not stipulate, neither does the State guaranty, that the quantity of gold contained in that sum shall bear, at all time to come, the same value, in relation either to land or to other commodities, as it did at the time when the parties contracted together. It is among the highest and first duties of the State, in relation to property, to maintain that standard inviolate and immutable, and it is because we have neglected that duty, that we are now suffering all the evil consequences of our neglect.

But, admitting that a certain *quantum* of injustice has been done to one class of the community during the suspension, and that now, by its removal, a consequent degree of injury and hardship is inflicted upon another, does it follow that we are either to perpetuate and aggravate the first injustice, or that it is wise or practicable to attempt to revise and re-adjust all the pecuniary transactions of the last twenty-five years? The honourable member, indeed, seems to think that nothing is more simple than the first of these courses; but he only looks at one side of the question. He puts the case of hardship to the land-owner who encumbered his estate during the depreciation; but let me ask him to recollect the mortgagee who lent his money before that event. Let me suppose the honourable member himself (and there is no man to whose candour and sense of justice I would with more confidence apply myself in this illustration) to have two mortgages upon his estate;

the one dated in 1796, and the other in 1811. How has he hitherto settled with his two creditors, and how does he propose to settle with them now? Has he two measures of justice and value—one for the creditor of 1811, and another for the creditor of 1796? What the honourable member now says to the mortgagee of 1811, in substance is this, “when I signed your mortgage the currency was depreciated forty per cent., and my rents have since fallen in nearly the same amount: if, therefore, I now reduce your claim in that proportion, there can be no real injustice.” Against the fairness of this proposal what says the mortgagee? “I lent my money,” he replies, “without reference to that difference, and I produce the act of parliament which prohibits any such reference:—I further appeal to the repeated and solemn declarations of the legislature, that cash payments should be resumed on the restoration of peace. I ask, if the depreciation had increased from forty to sixty in the first year after our contract, and from sixty to eighty in the year following, would you (the mortgager) have compensated me for these differences; or would you not, if it had suited your convenience, have paid me off without any such compensation? If you did not pay me off, it may be, because you assumed that the value of money would go on further diminishing from year to year, but you had no right to assume that it might not be the other way; and, at any rate, you were distinctly forewarned, that, in one contingency, which from the nature of things could not be very remote, the ancient standard was to be restored.”

Notwithstanding this answer, conclusive, I conceive, as to the strict legal right of the creditor, it may be said, that the case of the debtor may be such as to entitle him to an equitable consideration. Be it so. But then, what becomes of the other mortgagee who had lent his money in 1796? Has he been paid during the whole of the suspension in depreciated money? In 1811, for instance, did his debtor force him to accept payment in the currency of that year? Did he tender to him Bank notes, depreciated, as he says, forty per cent., together with the act of parliament which prohibits any reference to that depreciation? Against such a tender, backed by such a law, what would the mortgagee of 1796 have to urge? Might he not say,—“At the period when I made this advance, I relied on the public faith. The money which I lent you was of due weight and fineness; according to that standard which had remained unaltered since the reign of Elizabeth. To preserve that standard for ever inviolate, I knew was the declared policy of the State, and that parliament, in each succeeding reign, had passed laws for that purpose. Resting upon an unbroken pledge of near three centuries, upon the positive enactments of law, upon the universal understanding of the coun-

try, upon the obvious justice of the case, upon the avowed intention of parliament, recorded in every statute that imposed or continued the suspension,—that cash payments should be resumed as soon as possible, and upon the implied assurance, involved in this declaration, that it was not intended, by these temporary suspensions, to alter the standard of our money—upon all these grounds, I claim to be paid with reference to the existing difference between Bank notes and that standard.” “No!” replies the mortgager, “here is a law which forbids that reference, and by that law I will abide, whether the difference be forty or eighty per cent., whether the rent of my estate upon which your mortgage is secured, has been doubled or tripled in consequence of that difference.”

Now, I ask of the honourable member, in these two cases, could he claim an equitable adjustment in the one, and refuse it in the other? Could he require an abatement upon one mortgage, without accounting for the arrear due upon the other? If the two mortgages were held by different persons, I will not say that the man does not exist (certainly not the honourable member), who might, and perhaps, would, contend with each separately for such an arrangement; but, if both securities were held by one and the same individual, it would require no small share of ingenuity to satisfy *him*, that he was about to receive an equal measure of equity in both instances. For my own part, I should as little envy the casuistry which could countenance, as I should the justice which could award, such a decision.

But, whatever may be the difficulty in respect to mortgages, would an equitable adjustment be more easy in other pecuniary contracts, for instance, with the public creditor? Far from it. Here the principle is the same, but the difficulty would be a thousand fold. In the mass of the public debt, can we distinguish each separate loan, and the original subscribers to that loan? and if we could, can we hope to trace, and unravel, and identify, every separate purchase and sale connected with that debt, between the year 1797, and the present time? How should we distinguish the *bonâ fide* holders prior to 1797—those who became holders during the depreciation, and during each different state of it—and those who have become holders since the year 1814 or 1819; and, if we could distinguish them, must we not trace the money of each purchase since 1797, through all its previous career? Can we hope to follow every Bank-note through all the transactions, and to fix the date of each, in which it has formed a part? It may, for instance, happen that the present holder of any given quantity of three per cents., purchased when paper was at its greatest depreciation, had made that purchase with money received in discharge of some old mortgage. Is he to be amerced, or is the loss

to fall upon the seller of the stock who received that money, or upon the mortgager who paid it? or are we to trace this particular sum in all its component parts, divided and re-united in a thousand different ways, through all its prior and subsequent combinations, and to follow it up through all their ramifications? To attempt such a task would be as hopeless as to endeavour to identify, in the great mass of waters, the particular share of each tributary stream which has emptied itself into the ocean for the last twenty years.

The same difficulties would occur in the revision of all the private transactions of the community; and if we are to engage in this undertaking, we shall not satisfy the equity of the case, unless it embrace, not only all pecuniary contracts existing prior to 1797, and all which have been made since, and which are still in force, but likewise, all which have been closed and settled. Surely, every man must see that such a revision is impracticable; that it cannot be entertained without involving all the dealings of the community in inextricable confusion, and that any partial application of a principle, which nothing but a general re-adjustment could justify, would only tend to destroy all confidence and credit, and to aggravate all the evils which it is intended to remedy.

In arguing upon an assumed depreciation of forty per cent., I am anxious to be understood as not admitting, that, upon an average of the whole period, or indeed at any part of it, the depreciation actually reached that extent. The honourable member says, "the depreciation is not to be measured by the difference between the Mint and the market price of gold." I should wish to ask him, by what other test he would determine its extent? If, in 1811, it was open to any man, in any part of Europe, England excepted, to have bought a hundred guineas, or 105*l.* with 130*l.* in Bank-notes, how can it be contended, that the difference between the nominal value given and received, was not the measure of the depreciation of the paper? I can conceive no other measure; although I not only admit, but have uniformly maintained, that, having once parted with all our coin, we could not again resort to a metallic currency, without, in some degree, raising the value of the precious metals all over the world. This is a good reason, as I have stated before to this House, for using them as sparingly as possible, and for maintaining the circulation with as small a proportion of gold as is consistent with the preservation of a metallic standard. But, inasmuch as any diminution in the value of the precious metals—either from *natural* causes, such as an abundant supply from the mines, or from *legitimate* causes, such as the substitution of paper, really payable on demand, or the other contrivances of credit—involves no breach of a pecuniary contract, however prejudicial to the creditor; so, on the other

hand, an increased demand for the precious metals, in this or in any other country—(for the effect would be the same should the demand arise elsewhere)—or a diminished supply from the mines affords no ground for the interference of the State with the conditions of that contract, by which it would be violated for the benefit of the debtor.

I trust that I have satisfied the House, that, retaining the present standard of value, an adjustment between debtor and creditor, to be equitable, must embrace all contracts, as well prior as subsequent to 1797, and that such an adjustment is impracticable. I would next inquire, what would be the effect of altering that standard, without any reference to such an adjustment? An extensive alteration to this effect, I take to be the plan of the honourable member for Essex. In the first place, it is evident, that such an alteration would be nothing less than a direct breach of faith to all creditors generally, without any discrimination between debts contracted before the period of the depreciation, or during that period, or since the restoration of the currency.

Is the House of Commons prepared to sanction such a sweeping and monstrous principle as this? Is it prepared to say to the old creditor, "the full measure of injustice which you suffered for many years, we are now about to acknowledge, not, however, for the purpose of repairing, but of perpetuating, that injustice;"—and to all creditors who have entered into contracts since the restoration of the standard—"we are about to rob you of forty per cent. of your property, because there are other creditors in this country who made their contracts when the currency was depreciated to that amount." Can any legislature, not lost to all regard for character, and to every feeling of common honesty, listen for a moment to such morality, and to such proposals as these?

But, apart from these considerations, let us examine this measure on the narrower grounds of policy and expediency:—if, indeed, the House can allow itself to suppose, that the present case may be an exception to the general rule—that the interests of the state can never be promoted by the violation of public justice, and the forfeiture of public honour. How strange must be the condition of this country, if it can only prosper by a violation of national faith and a subversion of private property! if it can only be saved by a measure, reprobated by all statesmen and all historians—the wretched but antiquated resource of barbarous ignorance and arbitrary power, and only known among civilized communities, as the last mark of a nation's weakness and degradation! Does not the honourable member see, that such a measure would be the death-blow to all public credit, and to all confidence in private dealings between man and man? Does he not

see, that if you once lower your standard, it will become a precedent that will be resorted to on every emergency or temporary pressure—resorted to the more readily, as credit and every other more valuable resource, on which this country has hitherto relied, will be at an end? Does he not see, that the expectation of such a recurrence will produce much of the mischief of its reality?—that when men find, that in England there is no security in pecuniary contracts, they will seek that security elsewhere? If we once embark in this career; if once, openly and deliberately, we avow and recognize this principle, England, depend upon it, will rapidly descend—and not more rapidly in character than in wealth—to the level of those countries, in which, from ignorance and barbarism, such expedients are not yet exploded.

But, Sir, whatever fallacious expectations of relief to the country the honourable gentleman may have conceived from a plan so pregnant with mischief and disaster, fortunately there is little danger of its being adopted. In the mysterious councils of despotism such a project may be matured, so as to burst by surprise upon the country. Here it must be discussed in Parliament, and would be examined and understood by the Public, long before it could be ripe for execution. I will venture to say, that if this House were even to entertain such a proposition by a vote, the country would be in alarm and confusion, from one end of the kingdom to the other. All pecuniary dealings would be at an end; all pending transactions would be thrown into disorder; all debtors would be called upon for immediate payment; all holders of paper circulation would insist upon its being converted into coin or bullion; and all the coin and bullion so withdrawn, whether gold or silver, would be hoarded. Neither the Bank, nor the London bankers, nor the Country banks could survive the shock. Every man would be struggling to call in credits, whether in public or private hands, and either by converting those credits into goods, or by sending them abroad, to place them beyond the reach of the honourable member's bill. What a scene of strife, insolvency, stagnation of business, individual misery, and general disorder, would ensue! All this would precede the passing of the honourable gentleman's bill, whilst it was proceeding in its several stages in this and the other House of Parliament.

It would be a waste of the time of the House, to follow the measure in its effects when it should have become the law of the land, because such an event is happily impossible. Let the House give the honourable member his Committee, after the speech in which he has proposed it to-night, and I am perfectly sure, that this first step, in furtherance of his object, would, even to-morrow, create such a commencement of stir and alarm in the metropolis, and very soon in every part of the country, as would induce the

honourable gentleman himself, to be among the first to proclaim his abandonment of all such desperate expedients.

The House, I am sure, must be satisfied of the dangerous principle, and immediate tendency, of such a proposal; but it may not be altogether inexpedient to examine, a little, the extent to which, as I understand the honourable member, he would be disposed to go in the execution of his purpose. That extent I take to be, in substance this:—that he would lower the standard of the currency; in, or nearly in, the proportion of the difference between the average price of wheat taken for the period between 1797 and 1819, and the average price between 1819 and the present year: for instance, if the average price in the latter should be 45, and in the former 80 shillings; he would provide that, henceforward, 45 shillings should pass for 80 shillings; and, consequently, that, for every debt or contract now existing, a tender in this proportion should be a payment in full.

The honourable gentleman, in order to pave the way for this proposal, has laboured hard to prove that corn is a better standard than gold. Like most gentlemen who claim to be exclusively practical men, and who rail at those whom they are pleased to designate as theorists, and political economists—for no other reason than because they argue from principles which their adversaries cannot controvert, and proceed by deductions which they cannot refute or deny—the honourable member has, himself, launched into some of the wildest theories, and drawn his inferences from some of the most extravagant positions which were ever promulgated in this House.

As the foundation and groundwork of his plan, he lays down in principle, that “the standard of value in every country, should be that article which forms the constant and most general food of its population;” and therefore it is, that he fixes upon wheat. It follows from this principle, that wheat could not be the standard in Ireland. There potatoes must be the measure of value. This, indeed, is a novelty even in theory. We heard a great deal, in 1811, of fanciful standards, the ideal unit, the abstract pound sterling, and so forth; but, who ever heard before of a potatoe standard? What a beautiful simplicity of system, and what facility it would afford to the settlement of all transactions between the two parts of the same empire, to have a wheat standard for the one, and a potatoe standard for the other!

I will admit to the honourable member, that there is no positive and absolute disqualification, either in wheat or potatoes, to prevent the one or the other being a standard of value. Wheat, like any other commodity, possessing value, is capable of being made ^{the} *common measure* to which the relative value of all other commodities shall be referred, and the *common equivalent* or *medium*

by the intervention of which, they shall be exchanged the one against the other. But this is only saying, that a given measure of wheat, a bushel for instance, instead of a given quantity of gold, a sovereign for instance, shall be the money and legal tender of the country. For such a purpose, for reasons obvious to all who have ever turned their attention to the subject, wheat is one of the commodities the least adapted, always however with the exception of the new Irish standard, potatoes.

But the honourable member, I shall be told, does not propose to make wheat the currency, but only the standard. I am aware of it; but how does this help his theory? How can a given weight of gold, of a given fineness, and of a certain denomination, which in this country is now the common measure of all commodities, be itself liable to be varied in weight, fineness, or denomination, according to the exchangeable value of some other commodity, without taking from gold the quality of money, and transferring it to that other commodity? All that you do is, in fact, to make wheat money, and gold the representative of that money, as paper now is of gold. But to say, that one commodity shall be the money, and another the standard of that money, betrays a confusion of ideas, and is little short of a contradiction in terms. As well might you propose, that the Winchester bushel should be the measure of corn,—and the price of a yard of broad-cloth, the standard by which the contents of that bushel should be determined. What the honourable gentleman therefore aims at, as I conceive, is not that wheat should be either money or standard; but that the standard of money, instead of being fixed, once for all, should be varied, from time to time, according to the price of wheat; so that if wheat, upon an average of ten or twenty years, should fall, the standard should be lowered, or, what is the same thing, the denomination of our money be raised; and, *vice versa*, if wheat should rise, that the standard should be raised.

This appeared to me the honourable member's general doctrine, but perhaps I have mistaken the application of it: for although he suggests the lowering of the standard when the price of wheat falls, I heard nothing about raising it when the price rises: and, certainly, to do the latter, however called for by reciprocity and justice, would militate against his other leading principle—that the prosperity of a state depends on the gradual but constant depreciation of its currency. One thing, indeed, would rather confirm my suspicion, that this reciprocity forms no part of his plan; for, during the twenty years which preceded 1810, we never heard from him, or any other practical gentleman, a proposal to revise the standard, by a comparison of the average price of wheat for ten or twenty years preceding: the result of which might have been, that every debtor, instead of discharging a debt of 80s. by

the payment of 45s., would have had to pay nearly 80s. for every 45 of his debt, during ten or twenty years to come according as the one or the other of those terms might have been fixed upon for the periodical revision of the standard.

Without stopping to inquire, on the one hand, what would have been the effect of such a periodical revision at stated intervals, since the discovery of the mines of America, or how that effect might be varied hereafter by the future productiveness of those mines; and without adverting, on the other hand, to the obvious objection, that in this attempt to adjust the standard of money by the price of corn, the precious metals may be stationary in their relative value to other commodities, whilst their variation in respect to corn, may arise from peculiar circumstances bearing upon the price of that commodity, such as the growth of wealth and population in any particular country, its state of dependance or independance of foreign supply, the state of its corn laws, its state and relations of peace or war, the fluctuation of the seasons for a given number of years, and a variety of other circumstances of which we have witnessed the powerful effects during the late war, and since the restoration of peace. I say, without dwelling on these considerations, I would ask what would be the condition of a civilized and opulent country in which every pecuniary contract was to be revised and altered, every ten, or every twenty years? The wit of man, I am sure, could not devise a scheme better adapted to destroy all confidence and credit. Suppose they could survive it—which, however, is impossible—to what speculations, and struggles, and devices, would not the system give rise, to raise or depress the price of corn according to the conflicting interests of the parties? If a corn law now agitates the country from one end to the other, what would it do then? With what anxiety would the averages be watched in the last year of the term; and if their fairness be called in question now, what would be the suspicions at a time when every pecuniary contract for a pound sterling might be lowered to 15s. or raised to 25s. for the next term, according to the striking of that average? Is this the visionary plan which the honourable member for Callington* propounds, which the honourable member for Essex inculcates, whilst they are branding their opponents as theorists; because they maintain the good old principle, that the standard of money once fixed ought to be immutable; because they consider it as the guarantee, not only from the state to its own creditors, but the pledge, as far as the power of the state can extend, that, in pecuniary dealings between man and man, property shall be

* Mr. Attwood.

respected, and that all contracts entered into with sincerity, shall be settled in good faith, and executed in justice?

The first essay of this notable plan, if now adopted, would be founded on an average taken from a period of war, during which the country did not grow corn enough for its own consumption, during which it was afflicted with several harvests calamitously deficient, and forced to draw corn from abroad under every disadvantage of freight and expense, and during the greatest part of which period, too, Ireland was excluded from our market;—compared with an average taken from years of peace and general abundance, and when that abundance, joined to the immense produce of Ireland, has created a glut in all the markets of the empire.

Several other strange theories and positions were laid down by the honourable member for Essex in the course of his elaborate speech; but as they do not appear to me to have much connexion with the immediate object of his motion, I shall not waste the patience of the House by observing upon them at any length. There is one, however, which I cannot help adverting to; because it is a point to which he seemed to attach great importance, and to illustrate by many calculations. That point, if I understand the honourable member, is this, that we ought to measure the pressure of taxation by the price of corn. "In 1813," says the honourable member, "the price of wheat being 108s. 9d., and the taxes 74,674,798*l.*, 13,733,296 quarters of wheat were sufficient for the payment thereof: in the present year, the price of wheat being 45s.—very nearly double that amount of quarters are necessary to pay the taxes thereof." I wonder, when he was making these comparisons, that he did not extend them to a few other years. If he had, he would have found in 1812, for instance, that the taxes being 70,435,679*l.*, and wheat at the moderate price of 125s. 5d.—11,224,809 quarters of wheat were sufficient for the payment thereof. In 1815, that the taxes being 79,948,670*l.*, and the price of wheat only 64s. 4d.—24,854,508 quarters were requisite for the payment thereof. But, then, 1817 was again a prosperous year; for the taxes being reduced to 55,836,259*l.*, and wheat having risen to 94s. 9d.—11,786,017 were sufficient for the payment thereof. Now, according to this statement, the years 1812 and 1817 must have been those of the lightest pressure, and 1815 and 1821 those in which that pressure was most severe. If distress bordering upon famine, if misery bursting forth in insurrection, and all the other symptoms of wretchedness, discontent, and difficulty, are to be taken as symptoms of pressure upon the people; then I should say, that 1812 and 1817 were two years of which no good man can ever wish to witness the like again: but, if all the usual consequences of general ease in the great

masses of our condensed population, and all the habitual concomitants of contented industry, are indications of a better state of things, then I should say, that 1815 and 1821—periods of the severest pressure of taxation, according to this new measure of its pressure,—are among those years, in which, judging from their conduct, the labouring parts of the community have had least reason to complain of their situation.

The high price of the necessities of life is, at all times, a delicate topic for public discussion, from the misconceptions to which it is liable. I am not one of those who are indiscriminate advocates for cheap bread; on the contrary, I am ready to maintain, that a price moderate and reasonable, but, above all, as steady as possible, is most for the interest of the consumer; though I cannot admit that the amount of the public burthens, in any particular year, is in the inverse ratio of the price of corn, or that a scarcity price is a fair test, either of relief generally, or of the alleviation of that particular pressure. This forms no part of my creed of political economy. Indeed, I should think I was much nearer the truth in contending, that such a price of corn as that of 1812, instead of mitigating the pressure of the taxes, had a tendency to abridge the profits of capital and the comforts of the people, in much the same way as they would certainly be abridged by any great addition to the amount of the previously existing taxes.

The honourable member, however, is so convinced that, whatever inconvenience the consumers may have experienced from the extreme dearness of corn, they are suffering still more severely from its present cheapness, that he did not hesitate to offer, in support of this inference, a comparison between the quantity of corn imported into London in the years 1812 and 1821. In 1812, he says, "the quantity imported was 386,921 quarters; and in 1821, 365,535 only. Here," says the honourable member, "it is undeniably proved, that with an increasing demand, we should suppose, from a generally increased population, there was a less consumption in 1821 at 50s. a quarter, than in 1812 at 125s. a quarter." The quantities may be correct, but the explanation is obvious. In 1812, the country districts, as well as the metropolis, were fed in a great degree by foreign corn imported into the port of London. In 1821, all the country markets were glutted with corn of our own growth, and the demand in Marklane being supplied from those markets, it was, of course, limited to the consumption of London. This is the simple solution of the honourable gentleman's paradox; and I really believe that the inference which he has drawn from it is entitled to about as much weight as his unqualified assertion—"that misery and distress are rapidly increasing among all ranks of the people, not excepting those in

humble life; and that the proofs of it are to be found in the great increase of bankruptcy and crime."

Except in the increase of the revenue, I have not the means at hand of refuting, by documents and figures, the gloomy statements of the honourable member; but the revenue has certainly increased in all the articles of consumption, and is, I understand, still increasing. The honourable member must either disprove this fact, or explain how it happens, that universal distress leads to an increased consumption of commodities, most of which constitute the comforts and luxuries of the middling and inferior classes of the community. I believe him to be mistaken in respect to the increase of insolvency and crime. Sure I am, that Great Britain, as far as I can judge, appears to be more quiet and easily governed than at almost any period, which I can recollect, of those halcyon days when money was depreciated, and when, from that depreciation, among other evils which it inflicted on the labouring classes, the necessities of life were not only generally rising, but liable to great and rapid fluctuations, within short intervals of time, to which the price of labour could not accommodate itself.

Let it not be supposed, however, that I am insensible to the magnitude of the pressure which bears upon other classes of the community. It is, as I have said before in this House, the inevitable consequence of having tampered with the currency. It is an evil which has visited all classes in succession, and from the experience of which, I trust, future times will take a salutary warning. But the honourable member seems to think that this evil has fallen with disproportionate severity on the landed interest. This I cannot admit. It appears to me that its operation, in this respect, is rather a question of time than of degree, by a comparison with other interests. During the progress of depreciation, the evil did not reach the land-owner with an unencumbered estate. In the rise of his rents he found a full compensation for the cheapness of money; aye, more than a compensation, by the excessive speculation to which the stimulus of that cheapness gave rise. If his estate was encumbered, it is obvious that he was relatively still more benefited. By the fall of rents the encumbered estate, in its turn, feels that fall more severely; but it is as *debtor*, in common and in the same degree only with all other debtors, that the interest of the land-owner is affected. Taking the land-owner, therefore, abstractedly from any pecuniary engagements, he has been the most favoured class of the community. During the depreciation he was compensated to its full amount; and he is no loser if he gives up that compensation, now that the evil which it counterbalanced no longer exists. To this extent a fall of rent is to him no injury, although it will diminish the nominal nett income paid into his banker's hands.

On this point of rent, I know what prejudices and alarms exist at this moment; I know that it is a tender subject in this House; I know by how many other circumstances, independent of depreciation, the rents of land may be varied; and I also know the inconvenience of indulging in predictions on public matters; but I feel the opinion so confidently, that I will not hesitate to state it—that, after the struggle incident to the present re-adjustment of rents shall be over, the result of that re-adjustment, speaking generally, will be a very considerable permanent increase upon the rental of 1797:—and I state this opinion with the more assurance of its being realized, because such an increase is the natural consequence of circumstances unconnected with depreciation, and over which the return to cash payments can have no control.

Taking, therefore, the land-owner, simply as such, with his income doubled during the war, to meet depreciation; and with his income, when that depreciation ceases, considerable larger than when it began, is there any other class which has escaped with so little injury? It is no answer to this question, to talk of increased taxation, and the local burthens upon the land. These are evils greatly to be lamented; but the comparison is between the nett money income of the landlord, available for his own purposes after all local burthens have been paid, and the nett income of another member of the community, for instance, the annuitant. Both are liable to the same general taxation; and the 100*l.* received from land, or the 100*l.* derived from the funds, have no preference or distinction in this respect.

There is, indeed, I state it with deep regret, another class, connected with the land, whose losses are more severe, and whose reverse of fortune is one of the greatest calamities which the depreciation, in its consequences, has inflicted upon the country. I mean the Tenantry. For that most meritorious body of men, I feel the greatest compassion. But here again the same distinction applies as in the case of the landlord, between the tenant carrying on business upon his own capital, and the tenant under pecuniary engagements. Suppose the former to have commenced business in the year 1797, with a stock of his own worth 1000*l.*, and money at the end of ten years from that time to have been depreciated fifty per cent., his stock would then have been nominally worth 1500*l.*, but, in fact, he would not have been one penny the richer, all other commodities having risen in the same proportion: and, if money had then been restored to its former value, his stock would again have become nominally 1000*l.*, without his being in reality one penny the poorer. But, if he had borrowed that 1000*l.*, and at the end of ten years had reckoned himself (as he had a right to do) worth 500*l.* more than he owed, that gain

is now lost, though the capital, in both cases, remains the same. Still worse if he borrowed the 1000*l.* during the depreciation, he is now insolvent. In this illustration, the House will trace the progress of the evils growing out of a depreciating currency. The man who has borrowed 1000*l.*, and finds it increased to 1500*l.*, naturally concludes that he has been very successful in business. He enlarges his expenses, and style of living—his neighbour, who witnesses his prosperity, is tempted to follow his course; and hence arises a spirit of competition which raises the rent of land far beyond even the *quantum* of the depreciation.

The same state of things which led to this eager disposition to borrow, created also an unbounded facility to lend. What was the result upon the moral habits and feelings of the community? The sober expectations of industry, together with the old maxims and prudent courses by which those expectations have heretofore been realized, were neglected and exploded. Profit from depreciation became confounded with the legitimate return of capital, and, in too many instances, the ancient spirit of the British tenantry degenerated into dashing speculation, and consequent extravagance. But, will any man say, that the gain arising from a constantly growing depreciation, is the fair profit of industry, that it is the profit which the law intended to countenance or encourage, or that such a principle, if once avowed, would not soon defeat or destroy itself? Can there be a man so short-sighted as to believe, that, in the state in which we found ourselves at the close of the war, we could content ourselves with doing nothing? There was no alternative between resorting again to a fixed standard of value, or going on in a career of constantly increasing depreciation, which must have hurried the country at last to a general catastrophe; for, I believe, there is no instance of an opulent country led away by such a delusion, where it has not ended in a convulsion of the property, and generally of the power, of the state.

Having to make an option between these opposite courses, parliament in 1819, resolved to return to the ancient standard of value. It is this decision which the honourable member arraigns, and proposes to you to rescind. It would be difficult for him to contend, that it was not the most manly and the most honest course; and I think he has failed to prove that it was not, under all circumstances, the wisest and the best. Could I entertain a doubt in that respect (which I own I do not), it would by no means follow that we ought to undo in 1822, that which we had done in 1819; and when we have undergone all the sufferings and privations incident to the restoration of health, that we should again plunge into the same vicious indulgences and irregularities as had first brought on the disease.

In deciding upon a matter of state policy, of this complicated and delicate nature, we cannot do better than to take experience for our guide; because, in looking to the opinions of the wisest philosophers, and the proceedings of the greatest statesmen, of former days, under similar circumstances, we may at least be sure that we are resorting to authorities entitled, in all respects, to the greatest deference, but, above all, from their being free from the possible suspicion of their judgments being influenced by the prejudices, the passions, and the interests of the present day. I feel it necessary, on this occasion, to resort to these authorities, not on these grounds only, but because I have heard again, from the honourable member to-night, an assertion which astonished me when it was first made, in a former debate, by the honourable member for Westminster,* that "nothing like this depreciation and restoration of the currency ever occurred in any country before"—an assertion which astonished me the more, as, if my memory does not deceive me, that honourable baronet referred, on the same occasion, to the occurrences of King William's reign. Now, Sir, I affirm, without fear of contradiction: first, that the state of the currency in King William's time, prior to the year 1696, was, in principle, exactly similar to the state in which it was prior to the year 1819: secondly, that the restoration of that currency, in the year 1696, was a measure precisely similar, in principle, to the present restoration of our ancient standard of value: thirdly, that it brought upon the country difficulties precisely of the same nature: and, lastly, that the remedies then proposed for those difficulties, and rejected by parliament, as I trust the remedies now proposed will be rejected, were exactly the same as those which are in the contemplation of the honourable member.

No man can read the writers and historians of those days, or the Journal of Parliament, without being aware that the Currency was then greatly debased; so much so, that the current price of the ounce of silver (in the silver coin of the realm, then the only legal tender) fluctuated from 6*s.* 3*d.* to nearly 7*s.*, whilst the standard or coinage price was 5*s.* 2*d.* Is not this, in principle, the same depreciation as that which we have witnessed in our time? In this state of things, parliament, in the month of December 1695, addressed the king to take measures for the restoration of a sound Currency. What were those measures?—the calling in of all the clipped coin (which, having lost nearly half its standard weight, till then had passed at its full nominal value), and recoinning it of full weight, according to the ancient standard. Again, is not this, in principle, precisely what we have lately

* Sir Francis Burdett.

done? To show that the currency was then as much depreciated as I have stated (a depreciation at least equal to any which we have experienced, taken at its most exaggerated estimate), it is sufficient to mention, that it appears, by a return made from the Mint at that time, that five hundred and seventy-two bags of the silver coin called in, which ought to have weighed 221,418 ounces, did actually weigh only 113,771, leaving a deficiency of 107,647, or very nearly one half.

In respect to my third position, that this restoration of the standard by King William, brought upon the country difficulties of a similar nature to those which are now complained of, I might content myself with referring to historical memoirs, which have been long known to the world. But the recent publication of a most interesting Correspondence between King William and his minister, the Duke of Shrewsbury, so strikingly displays the extent of those difficulties, and so directly proves, at the same time, and in the most authentic manner, my last position,—that the remedies suggested were similar to those which are now proposed—that I am sure the House will permit me to read to them a few short extracts from that correspondence. For its publication the world is immediately indebted to Archdeacon Coxe, who introduces this part of it with the following statement. Speaking of the year 1696, he writes thus:

“The evils arising from the dilapidated state of the coinage had been so long and deeply felt, that in the preceding year, an act had passed for the immediate recoinage of the silver money which was clipped, and otherwise much decreased in value. The measures, however, which were adopted to accomplish so desirable a purpose, created a great, though temporary aggravation of the evil: for such a check to the circulation immediately ensued, that all the operations of trade were cramped, the collection of the public supplies was suspended, guineas were raised to the value of thirty shillings, and paper currency was reduced to an alarming discount; bank notes falling twenty, and tallies and other government securities sixty per cent. By these causes the army was deprived of its regular pay and supplies; and the letters of the King feelingly detail the mischievous consequences which ensued.”*

Here we see that the evil, like the depreciation which it has fallen to our lot to remedy, had been of long standing; and I think this description of its effects does not fall short even of the most desponding and exaggerated pictures of our present difficulties. In fact, the fall of prices, upon the then restoration of the standard, was quite as great as upon the present occasion

* Archdeacon Coxe's Shrewsbury Correspondence, p. 110.

The guinea, which was then a commodity fluctuating in its current value according to the price of bullion, fell from 30*s.* to 21*s.* 6*d.*; wool, from 36*s.* to 20*s.* a tod, and all other commodities in nearly the same proportion. But let us refer to the Correspondence itself. On the 15th of May 1696, we find the Duke of Shrewsbury writing to the King as follows:

"Upon the receipt of your Majesty's commands this morning, I engaged the rest of the justices to represent the case of the army abroad, to my Lord Godolphin, but found your Majesty's new letter to him had made him sufficiently sensible of their condition. We discoursed this morning with several of the most eminent goldsmiths, and with some of the Bank, and had the dismallest accounts from them of the state of credit in this town, and of the effects it would soon have upon all the traders in money: none of them being able to propose a remedy, except letting the parliament sit in June" [an inconvenience it would seem much dreaded by our ancestors in this House, but to which we submit with resignation], "*and enacting the clipt money to go again, the very hopes of which locks up all the gold and good Money, and would be to undo all that has been done.*"

Enacting the clip money to go again! undoing all that has been done! Is not this precisely what the honourable member for Essex points at, by his motion of this evening?

I shall now read a very short extract from a Letter of the King to the Duke of Shrewsbury, written after he had received a communication from the Lords Justices to the same effect as the above:—"Camp of Altere, 20th July, 1696. The letter from the Lords Justices, of the 14th, has quite overcome me, and I know not where I am, since at present I see no resource which can prevent the army from mutiny or total desertion." On the 28th July, after holding another council, the Duke of Shrewsbury writes to the King as follows: "It was universally the opinion of all here, that a session in your absence, and in the divisions the nation labours under now, would produce nothing but heat among themselves, and *petitions from all the counties about the state of the money; that they could afford little help as to a present supply, but by the expectation they would raise, that clipt money should be current again, or a recompense allowed for it; that the standard should be advanced, and the price of guineas improved.*"

Would not the house almost suppose, that instead of reading a dispatch dated in 1696, I was describing, from some letter written during the present session, the feelings which parts of the country have expressed, and the advice which the weakness of some individuals has suggested for our present difficulties? I will only read one short extract from the answer of King William to this letter; it is dated, "Camp at Altere, 6th August, 1696." "May

- God relieve us from our present embarrassment; for I cannot suppose it is his will to suffer a nation to perish, which he has so often almost miraculously saved.”*

• Sir; when we reflect, that this extract is not taken from a speech to parliament, or any document intended to meet the public eye, but from a confidential letter from a king to his minister and friend, the pious confidence which it breathes, and the beautiful simplicity of the language in which that confidence is expressed, are equally calculated to raise the general character of that great prince in our estimation.

But let us see a little, in more immediate reference to the present subject, under what circumstances this affecting letter was written. It was written at the head of his army by a king not insensible to military glory. But was military glory all that King William had then at stake? Was he not at the head of that army to defend his native land from the encroachments of an ambitious and too-powerful neighbour? Was he not engaged in a struggle for the liberties of this country, for the liberties of Europe, and (as far as a personal object could weigh with him in such a struggle) for the crown of England, which had been placed upon his head by the Revolution of 1688? It was in order to procure the pecuniary means of sustaining that struggle, that in the spring of 1696, he had sent the Earl of Portland to England. After long consultations with the ministers, with the Bank, and with the monied interest, that noble person returned to the king, confirming the reports of his council, that no mode of extricating him from his difficulties could be suggested, except that which we have already seen described, namely, “*the re-issuing of the clipped money, and the undoing all that has been done.*” Did King William listen to this suggestion, and dishonour his reign by lowering the standard of our money? No, Sir. He was a man that knew how to meet adversity. His life had been one continued struggle with difficulties; but it had been the fixed rule of that life to encounter them with an unshaken fortitude, and a rigid adherence to what he considered to be right. This was the quality of his mind, without which his other virtues would have lost all their lustre, a quality which did not forsake him on this most trying occasion.

Instead of re-dispatching the Earl of Portland to England to concert measures “*for undoing all that had been done,*” he sent him privately to sound Louis XIV., and to endeavour to bring about a negotiation for peace; and coming himself to England, he met his parliament on the 20th of October, 1696. In his Speech from the Throne on that day, he earnestly called their attention to the state of the Currency, and the difficulties in which the

* Archdeacon Coxe's Shrewsbury Correspondence, pp. 116, 120, 132.

country was, in consequence, involved. At that period, this subject agitated the country from one end to the other. The Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Lowndes, had recommended the lowering the standard from 5s. 2d. to 6s. 3d. the ounce of silver—an operation equivalent to the lowering of the gold standard, at this time, from 3l. 17s. 10½d. to 4l. 14s. 6d.,—a degree of depreciation which, to begin with, would, I believe, almost satisfy even the honourable member for Callington.

The popular feeling was all on the side of this advice. That feeling was manifested in petitions from several counties, and most of the great towns. But, did Parliament adopt this advice? Far from it. With true wisdom, on the very first day of the meeting, immediately after voting an Address in answer to the Speech from the Throne, on that same 20th of October, 1696, Mr. Montague, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, proposed, and Parliament adopted, the following resolution:—“*That this House will not alter the Standard of the Gold and Silver Coins of this kingdom, in fineness, weight, or denomination.*” The circumstance of coming to a resolution of this importance, on the very first day of the meeting, is the more remarkable, as in those times, the Address, in answer to the Speech, was sometimes not voted till some days after the opening; but the ministers of King William felt the great importance of removing all doubts, and of at once settling the public mind on this point.

We know what followed. The ancient standard was maintained; the difficulties gradually subsided; and every thing finding its proper level, all the transactions of the country were restored to their former facility. “The receiving, that is to say, the calling in, the silver money,” says a writer of that period, “could not but occasion much hardship and many complaints among the people; yet the greatest part attributed this to the necessity of affairs, and began to hope, both from the prospect of a peace, and wisdom of those at the helm, that they should enjoy more favourable times.”

We are now fortunately in the enjoyment of a peace dictated by ourselves, and I trust likely to be durable; but it must be admitted—indeed, the Shrewsbury Correspondence leaves no doubt upon the subject—that the peace of Ryswick, a peace by no means of the same lofty character, was hastened by the difficulties incident to the restoration of the currency. By that peace most of the objects of the war were either sacrificed or postponed. It was considered, at the time, as little better than a hollow truce, submitted to from necessity. But this only confirms the paramount importance which the government of King William attached to the restoration of the currency. Their view of the peace of Ryswick was certainly a just one; and we all know that, after a

few years of a feverish armistice, it was followed by a long and arduous war. If I refer at all to that war, the war of the Succession, it is to recall the recollection of the great share and glorious exertions of England in that contest; and to satisfy the House, that whatever were the straits to which the country was reduced in 1696, the firm and wise resolution then adopted was not incompatible with the speedy restoration of prosperity and power. If, in 1696, this House, having then so recently restored the ancient landmarks of property, refused, under the strongest temptation, both from the state of the war on the continent, and from popular feeling at home, again to alter them; shall we, after those same land-marks have now been replaced for three years, adopt a measure, which would be as fatal to our national character, as it would to the security of individual possession, to the maintenance of credit in private dealings, and to the very existence of the public credit of the state?

When projects of this nature are afloat out of doors, and when they are now propounded to this House, shall we, with such mighty interests at stake, hesitate to manifest our firm determination to maintain the present standard of value? Shall we shrink from the precedent of 1696? I am as little disposed as any man to call upon parliament to bind itself to any general or abstract principles, but I own this appears to me an occasion for such a proceeding. Under that impression, Sir, however conscious of the humble station which I hold in this House and in the country, and of its immeasurable distance from that held by the great man by whom the resolution of 1696 was moved; but with the same feelings for the honour and the best interests of my country, which actuated his bosom on that occasion; I shall conclude, thanking the House for their indulgence, by proposing to amend the motion of the honourable member, by substituting for it the resolution of 1696; namely, "*That this House will not alter the Standard of Gold or Silver, in fineness, weight, or denomination.*"

The debate was adjourned till the following day, when the original motion was supported by Mr. Bennet, Alderman Heygate, Mr. H. Gurney, Mr. Attwood, and Mr. Brougham; and the amendment by Mr. Haldimand, Mr. Secretary Peel, the Marquis of Londonderry, and Mr. Ricardo, who maintained that the success of the motion would be attended with all the injurious effects which Mr. Huskisson had so ably pointed out. The House divided: For Mr. Western's Motion, 30. For Mr. Huskisson's Amendment, 194. Majority, 164.

USURY LAWS REPEAL BILL.

FEBRUARY 16, 1824.

On the 11th, Mr. Serjeant Onslow obtained leave to bring in a Bill "for repealing the Laws which prohibit the taking of Interest for Money, or limit the rate of it." On the motion, that it be read a second time,

Mr. HUSKISSON said, he had been a member of the Committee to whom this subject was referred in the year 1816, and who had reported their opinions to the House. The opinion which he had formed in that Committee, he still entertained. Indeed he had never varied from it. He need hardly say that it was entirely in unison with the object of the learned serjeant. He considered the Usury Laws as only calculated to add to the difficulties of borrowing money, to increase litigation, and to encourage fraud.

FEBRUARY 27, 1824.

On the motion for going into a Committee on the Bill, Mr. Robertson moved, that it be committed on that day six months. The original motion was supported by Captain Marberly and Mr. Wynn; the amendment by Alderman Heygate, and also by Mr. Calcraft, who said, he thought the measure of such importance, that the Government should make it their own, and he put it to Mr. Huskisson, whether that would not be the more proper course to pursue.

Mr. HUSKISSON said, that the honourable gentleman had called upon him to state in what capacity he supported this measure, and had insisted that it ought to be brought forward as a government measure. But surely it would be very strange if the government were to take it out of the hands of a gentleman who had had the management of the subject for years, and who was peculiarly qualified, from the circumstance of his having been the Chairman of the former Committee. But, the honourable gentleman seemed to suppose, that if it were not made a government measure, all persons connected with Government ought to be precluded from voting upon it. Now, he sat there as a member of Parliament, like the honourable gentleman himself, to discharge his duty to the country, to the best of his abilities, and he would be the last man to describe any of those gentlemen who might be from him as dull, or stupid, or prejudiced. It was a subject

on which individuals might very widely and very conscientiously differ, without deserving any approbrious names. Because, after the best consideration he had been able to give to the measure, his opinions were in contradiction to those of the honourable gentleman, was that a reason that he should be taunted, as that honourable gentleman had been pleased to taunt him?

The view which he took of the question was shortly this; but he by no means pretended to say that he must be right. He thought, that any law which attempted to limit the rate of the interest of money was oppressive to those who wanted to borrow. The honourable gentleman was of opinion that the law was advantageous to the borrower; and yet, by a strange inconsistency, in describing the relative situation of the borrower and the lender, he maintained that the borrower was the party obliged to yield to the terms of the lender. The honourable gentleman had also alluded to the obloquy which attached to those who lent at a large rate of interest. But that obloquy was, as the law now stood, an aggravation of the misfortunes of the borrower; who was obliged to pay the lender a premium, in order to induce him to submit to the obloquy. Nor was it obloquy alone for which the borrower was compelled to pay the lender. He was obliged to pay for the whole course of evasion to which the existing law necessarily gave birth. From the evidence which would be proved in the Report of the Committee of 1818; from all that he had observed in other respects; and from all the reflection which he had been able to bestow upon the subject, he was perfectly satisfied, that the Usury Laws were oppressive and injurious to the borrowers of money.

He was not much surprised that individuals connected with the landed interest should have expressed their dissent from a proposition for repealing the present laws. In the first place, the landed interest always felt a much greater indisposition to a change of any kind, than the commercial did. For his own part, however, he was convinced that the law, as it stood, must, in the course of years, put the interest of landed proprietors to great hazard. It was well known, that, during the late war, it had become, in consequence of these laws, often difficult to obtain money by mortgage on land; and the consequence was, that the value of land had become unduly depreciated. He attached so much value to the repeal of the law, by which the interest of money was regulated in this country, that, if the gentlemen who had mortgages on their estates at five per cent., would be satisfied with a clause in the bill, providing that those mortgages should not be affected by the alteration of the law, whatever he might think of such a provision, he, for one, would consent to its admission. Much had been said of the existence of similar laws in

other countries. But, was there any resemblance between them? Did the Usury Laws in Holland empower any one to sue a man who had been guilty of usury, for penalties trebling in amount the principal which he had so lent?

The advocates for these laws talked of the ingenious evasions which took place respecting it; but it was of those very evasions that he complained. Those evasions were frequently ruinous expedients; and he charged the law with them. Adverting to the argument which had been made by an honourable gentleman, to show that those who derived their income from money transactions did not contribute so much to the revenue as the landed interest, he contended, that nothing could be more opposite to the fact. He was utterly at a loss to conceive how any one could, for a moment, suppose that from whatever source income was derived, whether from land, from the funds, from commerce, or from whatever other quarter, it did not pay equally in taxation to the revenue.

On the question, that the Speaker do leave the chair, the House divided: Ayes, 43. Noes, 34. The second reading of the Bill was afterwards postponed for six months.

ALTERATION IN THE LAWS RELATING TO THE SILK TRADE.

MARCH 5, 1824.

Mr. Baring, in presenting a Petition from the Silk Manufacturers of London, praying that the House would not suffer any Bill to pass into a law, which would repeal the prohibition on the importation of Foreign wrought Silk, and insisting that the removal of the said prohibition would be ruinous to their interests, said, that after all the consideration he could give to the subject, he was of opinion, that the Petitioners were in the right. With the application of their chemical knowledge to dyeing, and with their other advantages, the French would, he said, have such a start in all the branches of their Silk Manufacture, that he was sure there would be no person by whom the French Silks would not be exclusively used. It was not London alone that would be affected. Many country towns, and Taunton in particular, had changed from another manufacture to that of Silk. In this instance, he should vote against the system of Free Trade, and trusted that Ministers would abandon their intention. Mr. Secretary Canning begged the House to consider, if the reasoning of the honourable member for Taunton were adopted, in what a situation all those were likely to be placed, who were desirous of introducing a liberal system of Commercial Policy. It should be recollected, that this liberal system had been pressed upon Ministers by nearly the whole House, but by no individual with so much effect and so much authority, as by the same honourable member, who had that night argued so strenuously against it. If the proposition of the honourable gentleman were agreed to, it would be vain to endeavour to adopt a more liberal system, with regard to Silk, or to any other branch of Commerce. Mr. Denman said, that though he had no doubt that the ultimate result of the new system of commercial policy would be beneficial, a conviction of the inconveniences and hardships attendant on the change, would induce him to vote against it.

Mr. Hoskisson said, he was surprised, after what the honourable and learned gentleman had advanced on former occasions, that he should have overlooked the main argument for the proposed alteration; namely, the doing away with a system of prohibition the most offensive of all others in its consequences; as under it the officers of the excise were empowered to search the persons and the dwellings, not of dealers only, but of any person, in search of smuggled silks, and to resort to other modes of detection and examination extremely repugnant to the character of

Englishmen, and which had not unfrequently been even termed unconstitutional.

The honourable member for Taunton had stated, that labour was higher in this country than it was abroad. But the honourable gentleman seemed to have forgotten, that if it were dearer, as applied to one branch of manufacture, it was dearer with respect to all. In this respect Silk was not peculiar; and it was singular, that a mind so acute and enlightened, should have that night discovered, for the first time—(probably in consequence of some intelligence from Taunton)—that the price of labour in this country was dearer than it was on the Continent, in the manufacture of Silk alone. The cotton and woollen trades, and indeed all branches, laboured under the same disadvantage; yet in those measures we competed successfully with foreigners. On the authority of a French writer who had access to the best sources of information, he could assert, without fear of contradiction, that at that moment, and subject to these restrictions and to heavy duties, the export of Silk manufactured goods from Great Britain to the foreign markets, exceeded the whole export of France: and from that fact, the House would judge whether, with a duty of thirty per cent., the British Silk manufacturer could not be quite equal to compete with France in our own market.

The honourable gentleman had also expressed his astonishment that the subject had been brought forward by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, without consulting the parties interested, and without information obtained through a Committee. Certainly, he should have thought that Government had neglected its duty if it had not, with regard to the Silk Trade, attended, in some degree, to the repeated admonitions of the other side of the House; and recollecting the inquiries that had taken place in the other House of Parliament before Committees, the present could not be fairly called an attempt to legislate without due information. He protested against the assumption, that either that House or the Trade had been taken by surprise. The Trade, indeed, had been the first to suggest the removal of those restrictions; and he was confident they would be nearly the first to rejoice at their removal.

Mr. Davenport maintained, that the proposed measure would be a damper, if not an extinguisher, to the Silk Trade. Mr. Ellice approved of the liberal system of policy, but was unwilling to commence the alteration with that branch of industry, which was exposed to the greatest chance of successful competition. Mr. Secretary Peel entreated the House to consider, in what a light it would stand before Europe, if, after declaiming so long in favour of the principles of Free Trade, it did not attempt, instead of aiming at temporary popularity, to establish sound principles of commercial policy. How

greatly would those principles be prejudiced, if, knowing them to be irrefragable, Parliament, not having the courage to encounter difficulties, were to yield to the fears of the timid, or the representations of the interested.

MARCH 8, 1824.

The House having resolved itself into a committee of the whole House, on the Acts charging duties of Customs on goods, wares, and merchandize, and for granting Bounties on Linen and Silk Manufactures,

Mr. Huskisson rose, and spoke to the following effect:—

Although my right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he brought forward his general exposition of the Finances of the country, stated, with a perspicuity so peculiarly his own, the grounds upon which he should think it expedient to recommend to Parliament an alteration in the laws relating to the Silk Trade; yet, as considerable objections have been taken to this part of my right honourable friend's plan, both in this House and out of doors, however unable I may be to follow in the steps of my right honourable friend, I trust I shall have the indulgence of the Committee, while I state, in his unavoidable absence, the views of his Majesty's Government on this important subject.

To the general plan proposed by my right honourable friend, two descriptions of objections have been taken in this House and out of doors. The first class of objections proceeds from those who consider that it would be more desirable, that any relief which can be afforded, in the present state of the finances of the country, should fall upon some of the direct taxes. The second class of objections is urged by those who are desirous that the laws relative to the trade in Silk should remain as they are.

Now, with respect to the first class of objections, I own it appears to me, that the course in which his Majesty's Government have had to travel—since the state of the finances of the country has been such as to warrant them in considering what ought to be the proper subjects for the remission of taxation—has been to make the remission in the way most consonant with the wishes and interests of the people. In commencing measures of relief, his Majesty's Government felt the greatest anxiety; as it was their first duty, to afford assistance to those humbler classes of society, which had been more immediately affected by the increase of taxation, during the war, on certain articles of general consumption. In this view, the salt and the malt taxes have been considerably reduced. The leather tax has also been reduced; and last, though not least in their operation and effects on the lower classes of the people, lotteries have been entirely abolished.

A very considerable remission has also been made in the taxation affecting the middle classes of society.

Having thus extended relief to the amount of seven millions of taxes to the different classes of society, it has been asked, why we did not proceed in that course, by a further diminution of the assessed taxes? I am ready to admit that this would have been a desirable and a popular course; for nothing certainly is more unpleasant than the feeling with which a man pays money out of his pocket to a tax-gatherer, without having any thing to show for the money so paid but a receipt. We felt it our duty, however, to examine whether it might not be possible, not only to afford some relief in the way of taxation, but at the same time to make that relief conducive to the advancement of the industry, the wealth, and the prosperity of the country. We considered, whether the present moment was not peculiarly favourable for carrying into effect those principles of Commercial Policy which were calculated to produce these important results.

The state of our possessions in India has been recently alluded to; and certainly it is an object of no slight importance to consider, whether, by some convenient and practical arrangements, an extended mart may not be obtained for the native productions of our vast empire in that quarter. If we look also to the immense changes which are taking place in the colonial system of the world, it is peculiarly incumbent on this country not to lose sight of the great commercial advantages which may be derived from the immense mart which is opened by those changes, for the extension of our manufactures and commerce. It is true, that at this moment the provinces of South America are engaged in a struggle with the mother country, and that in many parts the government is still unsettled; but it is almost equally certain, that they can never return to that state of dependence, with reference at least to commercial relations, in which they were placed before the recent changes. When we consider the immense progress in the commercial relations between this country and the United States of America, since they established their independence, it is not too much to assume—allowing for the difference on the score of industry, skill, enterprise, and wealth, between the United States and South America, but still looking to the population of the latter, and to the extent of country over which that population is spread,—it is not, I say, too much to assume, that, under any system calculated to promote industry, South America will open a mart to our commerce, of which our present experience is but an earnest of its future extent.

In such a state of things, if we find, in legislating with a view to extended commercial advantages, that a particular branch of manufactures is clogged and impeded in its progress by im-

politic laws and regulations—such as restrictions on the freedom of labour, duties on the raw material, drawbacks improperly or inadequately applied, being in some cases more than are necessary, and in others not sufficient,—I think it then becomes the duty of a Government, having a small excess of revenue, carefully to inquire, whether it may not be better to forego the immediate benefit of a reduction of direct taxation, in order to remove such impolitic restriction.

It has been truly observed by the honourable member for Taunton, that the excess of revenue, on which my right honourable friend calculated as a permanent excess on which to found a remission of taxation, did not exceed 500,000*l*. Indeed, my right honourable friend himself stated, that he had taken a saving upon four years, amounting to 200,000*l*.; this saving arising, in part, from sources which could not be regarded as permanent. My right honourable friend has done this, under the feeling, that if ever we were to change the system, by which our Commerce and Manufactures were impeded, the present was a favourable moment for so doing. And he has contemplated, not merely the relief which would be derived from the extent to which taxation was remitted, but that further relief which might reasonably be expected to grow out of the increasing prosperity of the country. In promoting new branches of industry, public wealth, and commercial prosperity, we are sowing those seeds which, in the fulness and fecundity of future harvests, will afford us the means of future relief from other burthens; and which, if unfortunately the country should again be involved in war, will supply the best means by which our efforts will be sustained.

It is upon these principles, notwithstanding the unpopularity which they might bring upon themselves, that his Majesty's Government have determined to persevere in recommending to Parliament to make the alterations in the Laws relative to the Silk and Woollen Trades; the grounds of which alterations were so ably opened by my right honourable friend on the former occasion.

It has, I am aware, been said, that the views taken by his Majesty's Government, of the disadvantages under which the Silk Trade labours from the existing laws, have not been supported by those engaged in that trade. The honourable member for Cheshire* has said, that the trade is perfectly satisfied with the present state of the law; and the honourable member for Taunton asserts, that no person in the trade wishes for any change. Now, until I heard the assertion made in this House, I did not believe that there were any persons in the trade who did not wish

* Mr. Davenport.

to be relieved from the shackles and disadvantages under which they have hitherto laboured; for it occurred to me, that, during the last session of Parliament, almost all the principal persons concerned in the Silk Trade petitioned the House to be relieved from these very restrictions. And on looking to the petition presented by the Silk Manufacturers of London and Westminster, I find, that, so far from being satisfied with these restrictions, they express themselves thus:

“Important as this manufacture is acknowledged to be, and much as it has been recently extended, it is still depressed below its natural level, and prevented, by existing laws, from advancing to a far higher degree of prosperity than it has hitherto attained, and which, under more favourable circumstances, it would, without difficulty, realize. Possessing, as this country does, access to an unlimited supply of silk from its eastern possessions, an indefinite command over capital and machinery, and artizans whose skill and industry cannot be surpassed, your petitioners hesitate not to express their conviction, that, by judicious arrangements, the Silk Manufacture of Great Britain may yet be placed in a situation ultimately to triumph over foreign competition; and that silk, like cotton, may be rendered one of the staple commodities of the country.”

With such statements before him, my right honourable friend came down to the House, under the conviction that this trade was greatly depressed, and suffering especially from the duty imposed on the raw material. It will scarcely be necessary for me to enter into any arguments of a general nature, to show the impolicy of such a duty, or the thousand checks and disadvantages to which the trade is exposed, from regulations interfering with freedom of labour. I have heard no general argument advanced in favour of the state of things to which I have alluded. I have, indeed, heard some limited arguments put forward by honourable gentlemen opposite, which apply more immediately to the peculiar situation of this particular trade. The honourable member for Coventry, for instance, told us, on a former evening, that silk was not a native manufacture of this country. The honourable member for Taunton even went so far as to assert, that the silk manufacture, like peculiar kinds of fruit, could only flourish in particular places; and I confess that the instance which the honourable gentleman adduced in support of his proposition, struck me as somewhat a whimsical one; for he told us, that Taunton, which has at present several very extensive silk manufactures, was, thirty or forty years ago, unacquainted with the article, but possessed a considerable manufacture of woollens. Now, Sir, I do not say who the individual was that represented that very notable borough in Parliament, thirty or forty years ago. He

might have been a very eminent merchant, and most influential and enlightened member of this House; he might, for aught I know, have been familiarly conversant with the principles of political economy—a staunch and determined advocate of free trade—a zealous disciple of Adam Smith, whose opinions were, about that time, first published to the world; but, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer of that day had come down to the House, and said, “I am desirous to place the cotton manufactures”—(which were then subject to the same heavy duties which now attach to the silk trade)—“upon the same footing as other manufactures, with respect to which something like a free trade exists—I wish to give to that branch of our industry an opportunity of extending itself as far as it is capable in this country,” doubtless, the then honourable member for Taunton, be he who he might, representing the woollen manufactures of his constituents, would have risen in his place, and said, “How can you think of proposing any thing so injurious to the best interests of the country? The woollen manufacture has for ages been the staple trade of this country; and how can you expect that England, which possesses so little machinery, can compete with the fine and delicate textures which proceed from the Indian cotton manufactories, where labour is so cheap?” These are precisely the same objections which are now put forward by the honourable gentlemen opposite against the proposed alteration in the Silk trade. The House is told, that the manufacture of silk is not capable of being extended by the use of machinery, and, that its production requires more labour than the cotton manufacture. Had this grave objection been taken at the period to which I have alluded, the language of the honourable member for Taunton of that day would doubtless have been—“You surely will not touch the staple manufacture of England! Look at the alteration which is taking place in the dress of our females! Only think what the consequences will be, when native flannel petticoats and woollen hose shall have fallen into disuse!” And I dare to say it would have been adduced, as an instance of the “wisdom of our ancestors,” and the strongest possible proof of the high consideration in which the woollen manufacture had always been held, that the very shrouds of the dead were, by law, required to be composed exclusively of that native manufacture.

At this stage of the question, I entreat the attention of the Committee, whilst I state what has been the progress of the cotton manufacture, in the short period to which I have alluded; and I do so because I feel, and indeed it cannot be doubted, that the arguments which are now applied to the proposed change in the silk trade, were then applicable to the cotton manufacture. I know, Sir, of nothing in the history of commerce—I am not ac-

quainted with any thing in the history of our manufacturing prosperity—that can be at all compared with the wonderful change which has taken place in the cotton trade.

It is perfectly true, that forty years ago the manufacture of woollens was the great staple of the country. In the year 1780, the whole export of manufactured cotton goods, of every description, amounted in value to only 355,000*l*. In 1785, which was two years after the restoration of peace, and when the commerce of the country had in some measure recovered from the difficulties under which it necessarily laboured during the war, the whole extent of our cotton exports, of every description, amounted to no more than 864,000*l*; whilst, at the same period, the exports of woollen manufactured goods amounted to considerably more than four millions; the proportion between the two commodities being at that time as five to one. But how stands the case at present? Why, Sir, from that period to the present, that is from the year 1785 to the year 1822,—incredible almost as it may appear—the exports alone of manufactured cotton goods have risen to the enormous amount of 33,337,000*l*; being forty times greater than it was in the year 1785. Of course, I am speaking from the official estimate. But with respect to the woollen manufactures, the great staple trade of the country in former times, the exports do not, at the present moment, amount to more than 6,000,000*l*; being not so much as one-fifth the amount of the exports of cotton. Why then, Sir, when I see the pre-eminent advantages which have arisen from the circumstance of allowing capital to run in a free and unrestrained channel—when I contemplate the benefits which the country has derived from the application of sound and liberal principles to this single branch of commerce—am I not justified in endeavouring to prevail upon the House to extend still further those principles, which have produced such salutary results?

Hitherto, I have only stated what the growth of our cotton manufactures has been, with respect to our exports. In so doing—as I have already stated,—I took the official value; and this was perfectly fair, because I did so with both articles; although, of course, the official value is somewhat higher than the real. But, according to the best information I have been able to obtain on the subject—and I have taken some pains to acquire it—I believe I am not overstating the fact, when I state, that the real value of cotton goods consumed at home, within the last year, amounted to 32,000,000*l* sterling.

Now, I know I shall be asked, how does all this apply to the question of the Silk Trade, which is produced by little labour, and from a comparatively small quantity of raw material? But when I state, that of the thirty-two millions' worth of manufactured

goods, not more than six millions were invested in the raw material, and that the remaining twenty-six millions went to the profits of the capitalists and the income of the persons employed in the manufacture, I believe no man who takes a statesman-like view of the subject, will doubt the soundness of the proposition with which I set out; namely, that when you remove the restrictions and burthens from any particular branch of industry, you not only afford relief to the extent of the tax remitted, but you lay the foundation for commercial enterprise, of the beneficial effects of which it is impossible to foresee the extent. I would ask any man who has attentively considered the resources of this country, whether, if the restrictions had not been removed from the manufacture of cotton, (the continuance of which restrictions would necessarily have impeded its extension) this country could possibly have made the gigantic exertions which it put forth during the last war? I would ask, whether the number of persons employed in this manufacture, to the amount, I believe, of one million two hundred thousand souls, whose wants are supplied in return for their labour, does not afford more real encouragement to the agriculture of the country, than any regulation for keeping up artificial prices could possibly effect? It is to the increasing wealth of the manufacturing population and the progress of industry, and not to artificial regulations for creating high prices, that this country must look, not only for relief from her present burthens, but for the power of making fresh exertions, whenever her situation may demand them. It is not in the power of any artificial measures to give that real relief to agriculture, or to any other mode of occupation, which can only flow from the increasing activity and unceasing industry of the people.

The most remarkable feature in the history of the Cotton Manufacture is the impetus which it has given to invention, the numerous valuable discoveries which it has brought forth, the ingenuity which it has called into action,—the tendency and effect of all which have been, to produce the article at the lowest possible rate. Each of these valuable improvements occasioned, at the time, some inconvenience to those who had before produced the manufacture by manual labour; but the result has been, that not only has much more capital been beneficially vested in machinery, but a greater number of hands have been employed to manage it, in proportion as the prospect of fresh resources was opened to the manufacturer.

But what is the situation of the Silk Trade, under the system of entire prohibition from foreign competition, which some honourable gentlemen consider as its greatest advantage? Why, Sir, the system of monopoly in this trade has produced, what monopoly is always sure to produce, an indifference with regard to improve-

ment. That useful competition, which gives life to invention, which fosters ingenuity, and in manufacturing concerns promotes a desire to produce the article in the most economical form, has been completely extinguished. The system of prohibitory duties, which has been maintained with respect to the Silk Trade, has had the effect—to the shame of England be it spoken!—of leaving us far behind our neighbours in this branch of industry. We have witnessed that chilling and benumbing effect, which is always sure to be felt, when no genius is called into action, and when we are rendered indifferent to exertion by the indolent security of a prohibitory system. I have not the slightest doubt, that if the same system had been continued with respect to the cotton manufacture, it would at this moment be as subordinate in amount to the woollen, as it is junior in its introduction into this country.

I am afraid, Sir, I have already trespassed too long on the patience of the Committee; but I have been anxious to impress upon the House, and the country generally, that if there be a chance of giving new life and vigour to any branch of industry, which has either been in a state of stagnation or slow in its progress, there are at present, in the situation of the world, circumstances calculated to afford relief which never before existed; and I must say, that those who, blindly desirous of procuring immediate relief for the country by the remission of direct taxes, would neglect the ample, extended, and tempting field which now lies open before us, do not take a wise or a statesman-like view of the subject. Now, Sir, it is not merely for the reasons which I have attempted to explain, that I support the proposition of my right honourable friend, but also with reference to the general principle that all prohibitory duties are bad on articles of general consumption; and I wish to direct the serious attention of the Committee to the real nature of the prohibitory system. I would ask, if there be any evils in our penal code which can be at all compared with that system of prohibition which some gentlemen are so desirous to uphold? By the present laws, any individual, no matter who, the commonest ruffian in the street, may snatch from a gentleman any article which he suspects to be of foreign manufacture. Can any thing be less congenial to the spirit of English law, than this—that a man may enter the dwelling-house of his neighbour, and make a diligent search, because he suspects that some prohibited article is to be found in it? Have we not heard of exoise officers stopping gentlemen's carriages, and subjecting them to a diligent search, upon the bare suspicion of their containing contraband goods?

But, Sir, are these the only considerations which ought to induce us to abandon the system? See to what an extent of fraud and injury they give encouragement? The higher classes of

society will have these prohibited articles. In fact, these prohibitory regulations are like the game laws. If you continue them you must expect to have poachers. It is the higher classes of society who are responsible for all the breaches of those laws—laws which are made, not for the protection of the subject, but to produce an imaginary benefit, which I consider a real detriment, to the very manufacture which it is intended to serve. I profess to be very unlearned on these subjects, but I understand, that any man upon applying to the Court of Exchequer, may obtain what is called “a writ of assistance,” by virtue of which he is empowered to enter any gentleman’s dwelling, which is thus placed upon the footing of a gambling-house, and subjected to the search of the police.

The arguments of those who are opposed to the plan of my right honourable friend appear to be very singular. The operative classes, and the master manufacturers who have petitioned against the removal of the system, have done so upon the principle, that the prohibition is necessary for the maintenance of the trade; and although they frankly confess, that whatever goods the caprice and fashion of the day may require to be introduced into this country, may be imported at an insurance of 15 per cent., and sold in any shop in the kingdom, yet these very persons say that an *ad valorem* duty of 30 per cent. would be insufficient to afford them protection. Upon this subject, it is necessary that I should refer to the evidence which was adduced by these very persons before the Committee of the House of Parliament. It is at all times a disagreeable and tedious thing to do; but it will be curious for the Committee to examine the fact; since they will find that all the witnesses upon that occasion spoke to the necessity of the proposed alteration. To such inconsistencies are men sometimes driven in the pursuit of a particular object!

We are now told, that thirty per cent. will not be sufficient protection for the British manufacturer; but upon this subject it will only be necessary to refer the Committee to the evidence of two American merchants who visited England and France, in order to purchase silks to sell in America. One of them (Mr. Farnsworth) was asked—“In what respect do you consider the French silk goods to be either inferior or superior to ours?” He answered, “Their goods are generally afforded at a less rate than the English of similar quality, and upon that account they will have the preference of sale.” He was then asked, “At what per cent. would you estimate the difference of value of goods of nearly the same quality?” He replied, “Upon examining the goods here, I have made up my mind that there is something like twenty or twenty-five per cent. difference between the French

and English goods in blacks, and rather more in colours." In the article of ribands, he answered unhesitatingly, that there was a difference of twenty-five per cent. Here, then, is an American merchant who comes to Europe to make his purchases, and finds this to be the difference between the French and English manufactures—which difference, the committee will perceive, is five per cent. lower than the duty which is intended to be left for the protection of the English manufacturer.

I will now refer the Committee to the evidence of Mr. Hale—an eminent manufacturer in Spitalfields, well known to many members of this House for his probity, his active benevolence, and his great desire to promote the comforts and happiness of those who are in his employment. This gentleman's evidence must be considered extremely valuable, not only on account of his personal respectability, but his perfect competence to form a correct judgment on these matters. Mr. Hale says, "When I was at Paris, the manufacturers there, having no idea that I was a Spitalfield's manufacturer, offered, upon my payment of an insurance of ten per cent., to send me any quantity of manufactured silks, which I might choose to select, to any part of London I pleased, notwithstanding their liability to be seized as French, wherever they might be found." I beg the attention of the Committee to what follows: On being asked, "Do not a great many French goods find their way into this country?" Mr. Hale replied, "Yes; but I do not consider that an evil; because there was a disposition in this country to wear any thing that comes from France, and we have frequently found that when a new pattern has been introduced, it has immediately been copied; and that for one real French piece sold, there have been a thousand imitations sold." But Mr. Hale did not stop here: he went on to state, "It is not an uncommon thing for our manufacturers to copy the pattern immediately, and send these goods to Brighton; where, by the aid of fishermen and smugglers, the silks are disposed of as French, at a much higher price than would have been given in London."

Now, Sir, do not these facts prove to a demonstration, that with a protecting duty of thirty per cent., the British manufacturer will be able to compete with foreign manufactures? In which case, the revenue will be benefited, and there will be no ministering to the perverted taste of those who can derive no satisfaction from a garment, unless it be worn in violation of the law of the land, and affords encouragement to the smuggler. It is, therefore, idle to suppose, that with the great improvements which have taken place in the machinery employed in the Silk manufacture, since the trade escaped from the trammels of Spitalfields, and established itself in Manchester and other places,

the English Silk manufacture, with adequate protecting duties, will not be able to compete with that of France. Indeed, I have this day seen the deputation from Manchester, and they do not hesitate distinctly to say, that if time be granted to enable them to complete their arrangements, they can meet the French manufacturer in any country in the world, and will not be afraid of being distanced. [Hear! hear! from Mr. Philips.] The honourable gentleman will, by-and-bye, have an opportunity of contradicting this statement, if it be not correct; but I can assure the Committee, that since this subject was opened by my right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, there has been no want of due diligence, either on his part or mine, to make ourselves masters of this difficult question, by communication with those who were the best able to afford us information; and whilst, on the one hand, we are accused of having acted too precipitately, and, on the other, of not having come with sufficient expedition to a decided result, I trust we shall at least be acquitted of any want of exertion to form the best judgment that we could upon the matter. With respect to the charge of delay, it was impossible for us to come to a final determination, until we had seen how all the parties interested were likely to be affected.

I shall be told, I am well aware, that the persons concerned in the trade are the best judges of their own particular interests. I entertain, Sir, as great a deference as any man for the opinions which persons connected with any branch of manufacture may express on matters of detail; and in my official situation it is my duty to consult frequently with those from whom I can obtain information; but I trust it will not be considered inconsistent with the respect which I feel for those persons to declare, that, with respect to general propositions, I do not conceive them to be the best judges of what may be most conducive to the public interest. Without meaning, in the slightest degree—on the contrary, disclaiming the intention—to impute to those engaged in any particular pursuit a disposition to uphold themselves to the detriment of the community, I must, nevertheless, say, that a system of monopoly must be favourable to great capitalists; although, at the same time, it cramps trade generally, and does a great injury to the community. I am perfectly aware, that the proposed alterations must affect particular interests materially. The reduction of the duty on the raw material will doubtless create uneasiness with the broker, who at present receives his commission before the duty is paid. But there always will be partial interests that must suffer for a time; and all that Parliament can do, and all that it is its duty to do, is to deal with those interests which are affected by any great change, as tenderly as possible. One of the most numerous parties interested in the system of monopo-

ly, and most industrious in exciting a feeling out of doors against the intended change, are those persons who, under the prohibitory system, are benefited by smuggling. They are very naturally afraid that their illegal trade will suffer, and that, if there be no prohibition, no lady will fancy a French article when she can obtain an English one; so that, in fact, the ladies' maids and their mistresses are not the least part of the confederacy against the proposed arrangement.

Having now, Sir, stated the general grounds on which we call upon Parliament to give its support to Government, in the important change which is contemplated, I shall proceed to explain the mode in which it is intended to be carried into execution. The difficulty with which Government has had to contend is this:—It is obvious, that if we were to postpone the remission of the duties, an impression would be created in the mind of the consumer, that by deferring his purchases, he would be able to obtain the article at a much lower rate than the proposed remission would justify him in supposing; and the obvious effect of such a feeling on the part of the consumer would be to throw some manufacturers out of employment; a circumstance, which ought, if possible, to be avoided. It appeared, therefore, to his Majesty's Government, on the best consideration we could give the subject, that the wisest course we could take, with a view of putting an end to all the disquiet which at present exists among those who depend for subsistence on their daily labour in that manufacture, would be to make the remission of the duty as entire and as speedy as possible. I shall therefore propose, that the remission, instead of taking place on the 5th of July, as was originally intended, shall take place as early as the 25th of the present month.

Having taken this course to prevent stagnation in this branch of our commerce, to obtain employment for those who cannot live without it, and to give a stimulus to the manufacturer to continue his present speculations and extend his future enterprises, his Majesty's Government found themselves placed in a situation of some difficulty, with regard to those who had a stock of the raw material on hand—a stock which will, I am afraid, from the recent sales at the East-India House, be found to be not inconsiderable. Still, however, as we conceived, it was not impossible to come to a satisfactory arrangement. The arrangement which we preferred was this—to allow all persons having a stock of raw silk on hand, or a stock of thrown silk not in a manufactured state, to return it into the warehouse, to reclaim the duty on the quantity so warehoused, and afterwards to take it out again, on the 25th of March, subject only to the new rate of duty. The

It of this arrangement will be, that the present stock will only

be inapplicable to the purposes of the manufacturer, during the interval between the present day and the 25th of March—an interval so short as to prevent any suspension from taking place in the employment of the looms; for I am confident that the throwsters will never think of stopping their operatives for so trifling a difficulty as this measure seems likely to place in their way. It is perfectly true, that to that part of the stock which has been worked and distributed, we cannot extend the new arrangement. There some hardship must be felt; but if there be any thing in this objection, it is one which applies to all similar cases, and can be urged at all times when alterations come to be made in the existing duties. But it is probable, that this inconvenience will be less felt in the present instance, since, owing to the course of monopoly, the fluctuations in the price of the article have frequently been greater than the duty now remitted. But whether it be so or not, it would be an endless and impracticable task to go about to every haberdasher's shop throughout the country, to ascertain the precise quantity of the manufactured material on hand. In the course of the last year the article fluctuated from sixty, which was the highest, to forty shillings, in the course of a few months; and the Committee will perceive that this was a difference exceeding the rate of the duty.

These, Sir, are the principal points which I have to submit to the Committee, relative to the duties on silk. I now come to the other part of the proposition; namely, that which relates to the prohibition. It does appear to me—and on this point I am supported by the opinion of several eminent manufacturers—that, owing to the monopoly with which this trade has, for some time, been cursed, we are not upon a level in machinery, in working, and in colours, with the manufacturers of the Continent. That we are incapable of rising to an equality with them on this, as we have excelled them in other branches of manufacture, it would be difficult, upon any rational ground, to assert. It is the opinion of many experienced individuals, that if the prohibition were taken off, we should soon, not only be equal with, but even surpass them in every branch of the manufacture; but while we are in this state, and while the feeling exists, which is calculated to aggravate the fact to our disadvantage, it is the duty of Parliament to approach the subject with some regard even for the prejudices of the parties concerned. Instead, therefore, of making the repeal of the prohibition contemporaneous with the remission of the duties, I propose that it shall continue up to July, 1826.* I do

* The newspapers state, that "at this part of Mr. Huskisson's speech, there was a clapping of hands among the Silk Manufacturers, with whom the gallery was filled."

this under the impression, that something is due to the general feeling entertained upon the subject; and because I am, comparatively, indifferent as to the period when the principle shall come into full operation, so that I can but see a prospect of its being ultimately established.

Such, Sir, are the measures which I have to submit to the Committee in the shape of a resolution; and I have now to thank it for the attention with which I have been listened to, while I have explained the principles on which that resolution is founded. There is one part of the arrangement which I omitted to state; but it is of so much importance that it ought to be mentioned. I allude to a provision which we have in view, for allowing all manufactured goods intended for exportation to be deposited in warehouses, and for admitting the depositors to the full benefit of the drawback on the goods deposited. The advantage of this arrangement will be, that any manufacturer who may happen to have a stock immensely large, will be enabled to receive the drawback on it before he exports it; and will thus be placed, up to a certain point, on a level with those who have purchased the raw material, under the proposed remission of duty.

It is not, Sir, from an overweening attachment to any particular theory of political economy, that I have been induced to urge these principles upon the attention of the Committee; but because I believe them to be such as no men can call in question, and because I am convinced, that the application of them, in this particular instance, cannot fail to be eminently serviceable to the country. I have, in the course of my public life, seen too much of the uncertainty of theories, to be an enthusiast in favour of any. If I am accused of leaning strongly to liberal principles with regard to trade, I at once plead guilty to the charge: but they are principles founded in experience, and sanctioned by the highest authorities. In my opinion, to be liberal in matters of commercial policy is to remove the difficulties and jealousies which have hitherto prevented a free intercourse between different nations, to extend to each the advantages and enjoyments of the other, and to promote arts, sciences, and civilization: and when we speak with reference to the commercial interests of this country, the argument is strengthened instead of being weakened. Her wealth, her industry, her talent, her prosperity, are all so many inducements for us to liberalize the system. In short, Sir, I would be liberal to other countries, because, amongst other reasons, I feel that by being so, I best consult the interest of my own.

The right honourable gentleman concluded, amidst loud cheers from all parts of the House, which were again re-echoed by the silk manufacturers in the Gallery, with moving his first Resolu-

tion; viz. "That from and after the 25th of March, 1824, the several duties and drawbacks on the importation and exportation of the several sorts of Silk hereinafter mentioned, shall cease and determine; and also that from and after the 5th of July, 1826, the prohibitions on the importation of Silk Manufactures shall cease and determine."

Mr. Baring confessed, that the impression made on the House by the speech of the President of the Board of Trade, was such as to render it a vain hope, that any thing which he could himself offer would remove it. He was, however, satisfied, that the proposed measure was a dangerous experiment for the country, and that those who proposed it were completely ruining the Silk Manufacture of England. They would find this out, when they had deprived thousands of poor manufacturers of their bread. All the shops of London would be full of silk goods. The moment this plan was promulgated, the object of all who had capitals embarked in the manufacture would be to disentangle those capitals; and those who had no capital, except their labour, would be left to struggle for themselves, and perhaps to perish for want. Mr. Hume denied that the measure in question was a mere experiment. It proceeded upon such sound principles, that there could be no reasonable doubt of its success. The several Resolutions were agreed to, and a Bill was brought in founded thereupon; which passed on the 25th.

EXPOSITION OF THE FOREIGN COMMERCIAL
POLICY OF THE COUNTRY.

MARCH 25, 1825.

The House having resolved itself into a committee of the whole House, to which several of the Customs and Excise Consolidation Acts were referred,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose and spoke, in substance, as follows:—

Sir:—In requesting the attention of the Committee, whilst I state (in continuation of the subject which I had the honour to open on Monday last) the alterations which I propose to recommend in the Duties levied upon the importation of materials employed in some of our principal manufactures, and also in the Prohibitory Duties now imposed upon the manufactured productions of other countries, I need scarcely bespeak the disposition of the Committee to countenance the principle of these proposals, so far as they shall be found not inconsistent with the protection of our own industry. I feel the more assured of this general disposition in the Committee, not only as it was manifested on the former evening, but also from the experience which the House and the Country now have of the benefits to be derived from the removal of vexatious restraints, and meddling interference, in the concerns of internal industry or foreign commerce.

However confident either my right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or I myself, may have been, that the changes which, since the restoration of peace, it has been our duty to propose in our commercial policy, would be attended with the most salutary consequences, it was impossible for us—at least it was impossible for me—not to feel that, in the application of the soundest principles, the result, from unforeseen causes, may sometimes disappoint our expectations. It became us, therefore, to watch the issue of each experiment, and not to attempt too much at once, until we had felt our way, and until the public were prepared to accompany us in our further progress. But I think I am not too bold in stating that, in every instance, as far as we have hitherto gone, not only have the fears and forebodings of the particular interests by which we were opposed proved to be visionary and unfounded, but the expectations of our most sanguine supporters have been more than realized. In these advantages, therefore, the opponents of the measures by which they were produced, must, on the one hand, find a matter of con-

solation, that their admonitions did not persuade—that their arguments did not convince—that their predictions did not intimidate; and, on the other hand, past success is, to the supporters of those measures, a source of encouragement to follow up the same path, as likely to lead us still further in the career of public prosperity.

The Committee will recollect, that, when the change was made last year in the system of our Silk trade, one great alteration was the substitution of an *ad valorem* duty of 30*l.* per cent., instead of an absolute prohibition of all articles manufactured of silk. A doubt was suggested at the time, and in that doubt I participated, whether 30*l.* per cent. was not too high a duty;—not too high, indeed, according to the apprehensions of the British manufacturer (for he stated it would be quite inadequate to his protection), but whether its amount would not still leave some latitude to the smuggler. This latter ground of doubt still remains—the former, I believe, is already pretty well removed. If alarm now exist anywhere, and I know it does exist, it is transferred to the other side of the Channel, and is to be found only among the manufacturers of France, in consequence of the great progress and improvement, since made in this country, in every branch of the Silk trade.

Having thus ruled, that 30*l.* per cent. is the highest duty which could be maintained for the protection of a manufacture, in every part of which we were most behind foreign countries—the only extensive manufacture, which, on the score of general inferiority, stood in need of special protection,—surely it was time to inquire in what degree our other great manufactures were protected, and to consider if there be no inconvenience, no unfitness, no positive injury caused to ourselves, no suspicion and odium excited in foreign countries, by duties which are either absolutely prohibitory,—or, if the articles to which they attach admit of being smuggled, which have no other effect than to throw the business of importing them into the hands of the smuggler.

To bring this subject more particularly before the House, I will begin with our greatest manufacture, that of Cotton. It will not be denied, that, in this manufacture, we are superior to all other countries; and that, by the cheapness and quality of our goods, we undersell our competitors in all the markets of the world, which are open alike to us and to them. I do not except the market of the East Indies (the first seat of the manufacture), of which it may be said to be the staple, where the raw material is grown, where labour is cheaper than in any other country, and from which England and Europe were, for a long time, supplied with cotton goods. Now, however, large quantities of British cottons are sold in India at prices lower than they can be produced by the native manufacturers. If any possible doubt could

remain, that this manufacture has nothing to apprehend from competition anywhere, and, least of all, from a competition in our own home market, it must vanish when I state to the Committee, that the official value of cotton goods, exported last year, amounted to the astonishing sum of 30,795,000*l.*; and yet, such is the influence of old prejudices, that in our books of rates, the duties,—will the Committee believe it?—stand at this moment as follows:—on certain descriptions of cotton goods, 75*l.* per cent., on others 67*l.* 10*s.* per cent., on a third class 50*l.* per cent.

It is impossible not to smile at the discriminating shrewdness which made these distinctions, and which could discover that, with a protection of 67*l.* per cent., ten shillings more were wanting, to make the balance incline on the side of the British manufacturer, in the market of his own country. These absurd duties, and equally absurd distinctions, attach alike upon the productions of our own subjects in the East Indies, as upon those of foreign countries; whilst our manufactures are admitted, almost duty free, into all the territories of the East India Company. Instead of this graduated, but monstrous scale, I propose to admit all foreign articles manufactured wholly of cotton, whether from the East Indies or elsewhere, at one uniform duty of 10*l.* per cent.; which, I conceive, is sufficient to countervail the small duty levied upon the importation of the raw material into this country, and the duty upon any other articles used in the manufacture. Any protection, beyond this, I hold to be not only unnecessary but mischievous.

From cotton, I proceed to Woollens, one of our oldest manufactures—that which has been most nursed and dandled by the legislature—a favourite child, which, like other favourites, has, I suspect, suffered, rather than profited, by being spoiled and petted in rearing; whilst its younger brother of cotton, coming into the world much later, has thriven better by being much more left to rough it, and make its own way in life. Some detailed and authentic history of the paternal and zealous solicitude with which our ancestors in this House interposed to protect the woollen manufacture (should such a history ever be written), will alone preserve future generations from incredulity, in respect to the extent to which legislative interference was once carried in this branch of internal industry. Within my own time, regulating Acts, dealing with every minute process of the manufacture, have been repealed by the score; as have also heaps of other laws, equally salutary and wise, prescribing the mode of clipping wool, its package, the time to be allowed, and the forms to be observed, in removing it from one place to another—laws, the violation of which, in some instances, amounted to felony, but which now do
er disgrace the Statute-book. Fortunately for the cotton

manufacture, it was never favoured with this species of protection, so abundantly lavished upon woollen, and which was only withdrawn last year from silk, by the repeal of the Spitalfields' Acts.

I am well aware that this retrospect to former systems may be wearisome to the Committee, but it is not without its importance, if it were only to strengthen us against falling again into erroneous courses. I trust, therefore, that I may be allowed to state, from official documents, what has been the relative progress of our cotton and woollen manufactures, since the year 1765, being a period of sixty years:

The quantity of cotton wool imported into Great Britain, in the year ended the 5th of January 1765, was about 3,360,000 lbs. The value of cotton goods exported 200,000*l*.

The quantity of cotton wool imported in the year ended the 5th of January 1825, was 147,174,000 lbs. The value of cotton goods exported 30,795,000*l*.

The quantity of lamb and sheeps' wool imported in the year 1765, was 1,926,000 lbs. The value of woollen goods exported 5,159,000*l*.

The quantity of lamb and sheeps' wool imported in the year 1825, was 23,858,000 lbs. The value of woollen goods exported 6,926,000*l*.

Perhaps I may just add, that the quantity of raw silk imported in 1765, was 418,000 lbs.; and in 1825, 3,047,000 lbs.

In submitting these satisfactory statements, I cannot refrain from calling the attention of the Committee to one observation which they suggest to my mind. It must, I think, be admitted, that, in the year 1765, the whole quantity of sheeps' wool grown in this country could not be nearly so great as at present, when, owing to the many improvements in husbandry, and particularly in the art of raising winter food for the flocks, the number of sheep must be greatly increased; and yet the quantity of wool imported in that year was not one-twelfth of the quantity imported in 1825. Out of this aggregate supply from home growth, and foreign import, the whole wants of our own population were supplied in 1765, leaving to the amount of 5,159,000*l* of manufactured woollens for exportation. In the year 1825, out of the aggregate of the home growth, and of an import of wool so greatly exceeding that of 1765, the whole manufactured export is 6,926,000*l*, being an increase over that of 1765, of only 1,765,000*l*. Now, let me ask the Committee, how often, in these sixty years, has the increase of consumption in cotton and silk clothing been contemplated with alarm and jealousy, by the wool-grower, and the woollen manufacturer; by the descendants of those who passed laws (repealed only within these last ten years),

compelling us to be buried in woollens? And yet, what was our consumption of cotton—that other great article of clothing?—in 1765, next to nothing; and what is it now? greater probably than the whole amount of our woollens, to say nothing of the consumption of silk, which has also increased eight-fold. Can any statements show more decidedly the wonderful increase in the power of consumption by this country? Can any thing more forcibly illustrate that general position to which I have already adverted, and which cannot be too strongly impressed on those who legislate for the interests of commerce and industry—that the means which lead to increased consumption, and which are the foundation, as that consumption is the proof, of our prosperity will be most effectually promoted by an unrestrained competition not only between the capital and industry of different classes in the same country, but also by extending that competition as much as possible to all other countries.

The present rates of duty on foreign woollens vary from 50*l*. to 67*l*. 10*s*. per cent. I am satisfied that 15*l*. per cent. will answer every purpose of reasonable and fair protection; and this is the reduction, therefore, which I intend to submit to the Committee.

The next great branch of manufacture is that of Linens. This also has been the object of more nursing and interference than were good for its healthy and vigorous growth. But not to weary the Committee with details, I will proceed at once to state, that the present duties, which are very complicated, fluctuate from 40*l*. to 180*l*. per cent. and that I propose to simplify and reduce them, by putting them all at 25*l*. per cent.

In like manner the duties on Paper, which are now altogether prohibitory, I propose to reduce, so that they shall not exceed double the amount of the excise duty payable upon that article manufactured in this country. This reduction will extend to printed books, which now pay, if in any way bound, 6*l*. 10*s*. and if unbound 5*l*. the cwt. The amount of these duties is sufficient, as I have been assured, to lead to the smuggling of books printed abroad; and I am sure that, for the character of this country,—for the interest of science and literature—the importation of foreign works, which do not interfere with any copyright in England, ought not to be discouraged. I should, therefore, propose to lower these duties, regard being had to copyrights, which may require specific provisions, to 3*l*. 10*s*. and 3*l*. respectively.

Upon Glass, the present duty, which is 80*l*. I propose to lower to 20*l*. per cent.; and, instead of the heavy duty, so justly complained of, upon common glass bottles, amounting to 16*s*. 2*d*. a dozen (which, now that wine is reduced in price, amounts in many cases to more than half its value), I intend to recommend that of 3*s*. only.

Upon all descriptions of foreign Earthenware, an article with which we supply so many other countries, the present duty is 75*l.* per cent.; the effect of which is, that ornamented porcelain is abundantly smuggled from the continent. I propose to reduce the duty on earthenware, and plain porcelain goods to 15*l.*, and upon porcelain, gilt, or ornamented, to 30*l.* per cent.; which is quite as much as can be demanded, without throwing this branch of import into the hands of the smuggler.

To foreign Gloves, another manufacture, now altogether prohibited, but which are to be bought in every shop, I apply the same observation, and the same measure of duty, 30*l.* per cent.

I now come to the metallic substances.—The amount of the reduction which I propose upon Iron, from 6*l.* 10*s.* to 1*l.* 10*s.* a ton, has already been stated by my right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It afforded me great satisfaction, on that occasion, to hear the liberal sentiments avowed by a worthy alderman,* who is very extensively concerned in the Iron Works of this country. His unqualified approbation of this important change, I had flattered myself, would have been echoed by all the other Iron masters; but in this expectation I have been disappointed. Deputations from the mining districts have since been at the Board of Trade. I have heard their representations,—but I have not been convinced by them. I am bound to say, that they fully partake of the character of nearly all the communications (and they are many) which I have received from those whose interests in manufacture or trade are affected, or likely, in their apprehensions, to be affected, by the changes which I am now submitting to the Committee. They are all great advocates for free trade generally, all alike forward in their approbation of the principles on which the Government is now acting; but each has some reason to assign, quite conclusive, I have no doubt, in his own mind, why his peculiar calling should be made an exception. All these special reasons, I own, have only satisfied me, that the general rule of free competition is the best for all trades, as it is certainly the best for the public; though I can quite understand, that a privilege or monopoly given to any one branch, whilst it is denied to all others, might be an advantage to that particular trade. But is it fit that in an article like iron, of universal use in all our manufactures, in all the arts and conveniences of life, in agriculture, in houses, in ships, we should now be suffering from a scarcity of that metal?—that we should submit to have every article, in which it is used, greatly increased in price, as well as deteriorated, perhaps, in quality, on account of the enormous duty imposed upon foreign iron, not for

* Mr. Alderman Thompson.

the purpose of revenue, but for that of protection,—a duty which amounts nearly to a monopoly in favour of the British Iron masters? Has not the price of British iron, of late, been almost doubled? Have not all the Iron masters demands for iron beyond what they can supply? Is there no risk or danger to our hardware manufactures at Birmingham and Sheffield from this state of things? Can they execute the orders which they receive from abroad, if iron continues at its present price, or is to rise still higher? How many thousand workmen will be thrown out of employ, if this branch of trade be lost to this country? Is there no reason to apprehend its being transferred to Germany, the Netherlands, and other parts of the Continent? I have been assured, upon authority not likely to mislead me, that very extensive orders, which have lately been received at Birmingham from the United States, and other parts, have been refused, because the great rise in the price of iron does not admit of the articles being made within the limits specified in those orders. And what is the consequence? They are transferred to the Continent; and the share of this country in their execution, is confined to making the models and drawings, which are prepared here, for the guidance of the foreign artificers. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance, that the duties on foreign iron should be reduced, in reference, not only to the interests of the consumer in this country, but also to the well-being of those numerous classes who are employed in all the manufactures of this metal for foreign countries. The necessity of this reduction becomes the more urgent from the fact, that, at this time, the whole produce of the British mines is not adequate to supply the present demand. But, quite independent of this evil, which may be temporary, I own it appears to me, that it would be of great advantage to the manufactures of this country to be able to procure foreign iron, particularly that of Sweden, on easy terms. Swedish iron is known to be superior to our own; its admixture with British iron would improve the quality of our manufactures; they would be held in higher estimation, and not only be able to command a more decided preference in foreign markets, but become more valuable for all the purposes to which iron is applied in our domestic consumption. Take, for instance, the important article of iron cables, now so generally used by our shipping; it will not be denied, that, by a due proportion of Swedish iron in their composition, their strength and tenacity would be improved. Here, then, an important advantage to our naval interests, connected too with the safety of every ship using iron cables, is directly counteracted by the present high duties on foreign iron. The result of its more free admission, I am persuaded, will be, not only to check those extreme fluctuations, which, of late years,

we have witnessed in the price of iron—at one time so low as to be ruinous to the producer, at another so high, as to be greatly distressing to all the other interests of the country—but also by the improvements to which it will lead, to extend the use and consumption of manufactured iron (the bulk of which will always be our own) both at home and abroad. This increased demand, joined to a more steady price, will, ere long, more than compensate to the British iron-masters the temporary inconvenience, if any, which some of them apprehend from the extent to which it is proposed to carry the reduction of this duty.

The next metal upon which I have to propose a reduction is Copper. The duty, which in 1790 did not exceed 10*l.*, now amounts to 54*l.* a ton. This high duty is not less injurious to the manufacturer than the high duty on iron. Now, if the price of our copper manufactures is to exceed that of the like articles of foreign manufacture, in any thing like a proportion to this enormous duty, it is evident, that, even assuming some superiority in the skill of our workmen, we must ultimately be driven from the markets of other countries. The quantity of copper produced by the English mines amounts to about 10,000 tons annually, of which something less than one-half suffices for the home consumption. This being the proportion, do not the owners of copper mines see, that if, by the high price at which the manufacturer buys copper, he should lose his hold upon the foreign market, they must be injured by the effects of their own monopoly? The annual supply required would then be diminished to less than 5,000 tons; and they would, therefore, run the risk of losing more by the continuance of the present high duties, than by the repeal of them. These prohibitory duties have already, in my judgment, been attended with serious injury. They have prevented copper, not only in an unmanufactured, but in an imperfectly smelted state, from coming into this country. This metal exists in great abundance, not only in several parts of Europe, but also in some of the new States of America. It would have been sent here, as it used to be, in an imperfect state, in payment for British manufactures. Here it would have undergone the process of purifying, of rolling, or of being otherwise prepared for consumption, by the means of our superior machinery, had it not been kept away by impolitic restrictions. They operated as a bounty upon the transfer of our capital to other countries, and as a premium to encourage the inhabitants of those countries to do for themselves that which, greatly to our own advantage, we should otherwise have continued to do for them. At the same time I am aware, that considerable capitals have been invested in our copper mines, under the encouragement given by the present monopoly, and how difficult it is to do all that the public interest would require,

without injury to those particular interests. This, in almost every instance, is the most arduous part of the task which a sense of public duty has imposed upon me. In the present case, however, I believe that I may safely, and I hope with advantage to both parties, propose to reduce the duty on copper from 54*l.* to 27*l.* a ton; without committing myself, not to recommend, at a future period, even a further reduction, if it should appear that the present limit is not sufficient to enable our manufacturers to preserve their foreign market, and that, at a lower rate of duty, no great or sudden check would be given to the British mines.

There is another metallic substance, in some degree connected with the copper manufacture, the duty upon which ought to be considerably lowered.—I mean Zinc, commonly known in trade under the name of Spelter. This semi-metal enters, in the proportion of about one-third, I understand, into the composition of brass. The selling price of spelter, on the Continent, is about 20*l.* a ton, here about 45*l.*, and the duty is 28*l.* Now, with a duty upon copper of 54*l.* a ton, and upon spelter of 28*l.*, what chance can we have of maintaining a footing in the foreign market for any description of brass wares? None;—and accordingly I am assured that, at this moment, our briskest demand in this trade is in the preparation of moulds and patterns for the foreign manufacturer. Upon spelter, I shall propose to reduce the duty about one half. I feel that I ought to go still lower, and perhaps I shall, after making further inquiry, in some future stage; for I am convinced that the mines of this country cannot successfully compete with those of Silesia, in which spelter is principally produced.

Upon Tin, the present duty is excessive. It is an article of which we have more the command, and is of less extensive consumption. I propose, however, to reduce the duty more than one half—from 5*l.* 9*s.* 3*d.* to 2*l.* 10*s.* the cwt.

The duty on Lead is now 20*l.* per cent. *ad valorem*; this I propose to lower to 15*l.*, which, I hope, will be sufficient to admit of a foreign import, and to check the present exorbitant price of that metal. If I shall find, upon further investigation, that this is not likely to be the case, I shall reserve to myself to suggest, on some future stage, a further reduction in this duty also.

There are several other enumerated articles in the Book of Rates, upon which I propose to reduce the duties upon the same principle. I should only weary the Committee by going through the detail of these alterations—they will be found in the schedule annexed to one of the resolutions which I shall submit for their consideration. Perhaps, however, I ought to state that, although every thing which can, by any accident, be considered as an object of jealousy to any of our manufactures, is enumerated by

name in the Book of Rates, there are other things not directly connected with trade or merchandize, but with art, science, and literature, and deriving their value solely from such connexion, which, whenever they are brought into this country, cost the person who imports them 50*l*. per cent. on their estimated value, under a sweeping clause, at the end of that book, which provides, that upon all goods, wares, and merchandize, being, either in part or wholly, manufactured, and not enumerated, a duty of 50*l*. per cent. shall be payable, and a duty of 20*l*. per cent. upon all non-enumerated goods, not being either in part or wholly manufactured. Now this duty of 50*l*. per cent., of little value to the Exchequer, and attaching principally upon such objects as I have adverted to, is, I am sure, one which the Committee will concur with me in thinking ought to be reduced. The instances in which this high duty attaches on articles of curiosity and interest, are not very numerous; they are sometimes ludicrous, perhaps, but not very creditable to the good taste and character of this country. One instance, which I recollect to have heard, I will mention. A gentleman imported a mummy from Egypt. The officers of the customs were not a little puzzled by this non-enumerated article. These remains of mortality, muscles and sinews, pickled and preserved three thousand years ago, could not be deemed a raw material; and therefore, upon deliberation, it was determined to tax them as a manufactured article. The importer, anxious that his mummy should not be seized, stated its value at 400*l*. The declaration cost him 200*l*., being at the rate of 50*l*. per cent. on the manufactured merchandize which he was about to import. I propose to reduce the duty on manufactured articles, not enumerated, from 50*l*. to 20*l*., and on articles unmanufactured, from 20*l*. to 10*l*. per cent.

The result of the alterations, which I have now stated to the Committee, will be this—that upon foreign manufactured articles generally, where the duty is imposed for the protection of our own manufactures, and not for the purpose of collecting revenue, that duty will, in no instance, exceed 30*l*. per cent. If the article be not manufactured much cheaper or much better abroad than at home, such a duty is ample for protection. If it be manufactured so much cheaper, or so much better abroad, as to render 30*l*. per cent. insufficient, my answer is, first, that a greater protection is only a premium to the smuggler; and, secondly, that there is no wisdom in attempting to bolster up a competition, which this degree of protection will not sustain. Let the state have the tax, which is now the reward of the smuggler, and let the consumer have the better and cheaper article, without the painful consciousness that he is consulting his own convenience at the expense of daily violating the laws of his country.

When my right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is labouring to put an end, as fast as he can, to the evils of smuggling, by lowering the duties, increased during the pressure of the war, and for the purposes of revenue, upon articles of consumption, the last thing which we ought to countenance, is the continuance of high duties, not for the benefit of the Exchequer, but for the supposed protection of certain branches of manufacture. Is the illicit importation of foreign spirits to be checked, merely to give fresh life to the smuggling of cambrics and lace from Flanders, or of gloves and porcelain from France? I cannot think that gentlemen are aware to what an extent all the moral evils of smuggling are encouraged by the prohibition of these comparatively petty articles. Let any one go down to Brighton, and wander along the coast from thence to Hastings; I will undertake to say, that he shall most easily find, at every place he comes to, persons who will engage to deliver to him, within ten days or a fortnight, any prohibited article of manufacture, which he can name, and almost in any quantity, upon an advance of 30*l*. per cent. beyond the prime cost at Paris. What is the consequence of such a system? A number of families, that would otherwise be valuable and industrious members of society, exist, and train up their children, in a state of perpetual warfare with the law, till they insensibly acquire the habits and feelings of outlaws, standing rather in the relation of pirates, than of fellow-subjects, to the rest of the community. And is this abominable system to be tolerated, not from any over-ruling necessity of upholding the revenue, nay, possibly, to the injury of the Exchequer, but merely because, in a few secondary branches of manufacture, we do not possess the same natural advantages, or the same degree of skill, as our neighbours? If cambrics are made better at Valenciennes, is that a sufficient reason for imposing a prohibitory duty on all linens; a duty from which the revenue gets next to nothing, whilst the country is full of the proscribed article? If certain descriptions of paper for engraving are made more perfect in France, are we always to be condemned to the use of an inferior and dearer article of home manufacture? The time has been, when it was found quite a sufficient reason for imposing a prohibitory duty upon a foreign article, that it was better than we could make at home; but, I trust, when such calls are made upon this House hereafter, our first answer at least will be, let us see what can be done by competition; first try to imitate, and by-and-bye, perhaps, you will surpass your foreign rival. This is the feeling, this is the hope and the emulation which we have now created in the silk trade; and, I believe, with a very prospect of the most complete success. But this feeling would have been called forth under the old and helpless

system of prohibitory protection. Prohibitions, in fact, are a premium to mediocrity. They destroy the best incentive to excellence, the best stimulus to invention and improvement. They condemn the community to suffer, both in price and quality, all the evils of monopoly, except in as far as a remedy can be found in the baneful arts of the smuggler. They have also another of the great evils of monopoly, that of exposing the consumer, as well as the dealer, to rapid and inconvenient fluctuations in price.

With the knowledge of this fact, that we furnish in a proportion far exceeding the supply from any other country, the general markets of the world, with all the leading articles of manufacture, upon which I have now proposed greatly to lower the duties, I own that I am not afraid of this country being overwhelmed with foreign goods. Some, I know, will come in, which are now excluded; I shall be glad of it. In various ways, their admission will be beneficial to the general interests of the country. That it cannot be extensively injurious to any of those interests, may be inferred, not only from the arguments with which I have already troubled the Committee, but from actual experience. In the year 1786, we entered into a commercial treaty with France. Under the stipulations of that treaty, the cottons and woollens of France were admitted into this country, upon a duty of 12*l.* per cent.—I now propose for the latter 15*l.* Hardware, cutlery, turnery, &c. upon a duty of 10*l.*—I now propose 20*l.* per cent. Pottery and glass, &c. under a duty of 12*l.*—I now propose 15*l.* upon the former, and 20*l.* upon the latter. What was the result of this treaty? We sent goods of various descriptions to the French market, and England was supplied with other goods of French production; but no injury accrued—no check was given to any particular branch of our staple manufactures, in consequence of this interchange. One advantage arising from it was, to create a spirit of emulation, an instance of which occurred in the woollen trade. Soon after the opening of the intercourse between the two countries, French cloths of a fine quality were imported in considerable quantity. They were preferred to our own. No fashionable man was to be seen without a coat of French cloth. What followed? In less than two years, the cloth of our own manufactures became equal to that imported from France; the one could not be distinguished from the other; and coats of French cloth were still the fashion, whilst the cloth of which they were made was manufactured in this country. In like manner, we shall now, in all probability, import some printed cottons from Alsace and Switzerland, of richer and brighter colours than our own; some fancy muslins from India; some silk stuffs, some porcelain from France, objects for which curiosity or fashion may create a demand in this metropolis; but they will not interfere with those

articles of more wide and universal consumption, which our own manufactures supply cheaper and better; whilst they will excite the ingenuity of our artists and workmen, to attempt improvements, which may enable them to enter the lists with the foreigner, in those very articles in which he has now an acknowledged superiority.

I know it may be objected, that a great change has taken place in the situation of the British manufactures, since the French treaty of 1786—that we have been engaged in a long and expensive war, and that we have now to support the weight of a great many new and heavy taxes. I admit that such is the case: other countries, however, have not been exempted from the calamities of war; their taxes, too, have been increased; their burthens made to press more heavily. What is still more mischievous, in most of these countries, their commercial and manufacturing establishments have felt more directly the ravages and interruption of war; many of them have been violently swept away, whilst the capitals which they had called forth, if not confiscated, have been impaired or diminished, by the exactions of military power. In this country no such calamity has been experienced. The trading capital of England remains entire; even during the war, it continued constantly increasing; and in respect to the comparative cheapness of labour in foreign countries, although by no means an immaterial part of the present consideration, it is not alone sufficient, as experience has shown, to make the balance preponderate in their favour. Since the invention of the steam-engine, coupled with the application of so many other discoveries, both in mechanical and chemical science, to all the arts of life, the mere estimate of manual labour is lost sight of, in comparison with that of the creative powers of mind. It is the union of those powers, and of the great capitals which call them into action, which distinguishes British industry, and has placed it in the commanding situation which it now holds in the world. To these advantages, are joined that energy and continuity of enterprise, that perseverance and steadiness of exertion, which, even by our rivals, are admitted to belong to the English character. It is upon these qualities, and these advantages, much more than upon any system of bounties and protecting duties, that I rely with confidence for the maintenance and improvement of the station which we now occupy among the trading communities of the world.

I expect further to be told, as a general objection to the course which I now recommend,—indeed I have already been told in the correspondence which I have felt it right to hold with some of our most intelligent and accomplished merchants and manufacturers on this subject, before I brought it before this Committee,

—that in 1786, we had insured from France, by treaty, a reciprocity of commercial advantages; but that, at present, we have made no such arrangement. This objection I admit, in one respect, deserves consideration. I mean in its relation to the foreign market;—with regard to the danger of our being undersold in our own market, it does not hold at all. Now, in respect to our deferring any improvement in our own commercial system, until we can persuade foreign states to view it as a concession to them, which we are ready to make in return for similar concessions on their part, I cannot, I own, discover much wisdom in such a line of policy; but, as I have already stated that I had corresponded with others on this part of the subject, I am sure it will be an acceptable relief to the Committee (wearied as they must be with hearing me), if I substitute for my own arguments, the more forcible reasoning of one of my correspondents, a gentleman deeply concerned as a manufacturer and a merchant, who unites to great practical knowledge a vigorous understanding, of which he has formerly given proofs in this House, which must make us all regret that he is no longer a member of it;—I mean Mr. Kirkman Finlay. I received from him a letter, dated the 18th of February, of which the following is an extract:—

“Subscribing, as I do, to every one of the advantages stated in your letter, I will not occupy your time by going further into the subject; at the same time, I must not lead you to suppose that such a measure is likely to be adopted without some opposition from manufacturers, who have all their old prejudices to remove before they can subscribe, in their own case, to the sound principles of free commercial intercourse, which you are, so much to the public advantage, endeavouring to establish. Believe me, that no one takes a deeper interest than I do in the success of all such measures; and I am certain that the adoption of such a plan as we are now talking of, will go far in its consequences to satisfy persons, both at home and abroad, of the benefits that will arise to all countries from the general establishment of such measures. It is no doubt true, that it will be argued that such concessions ought not to be granted to foreign states, without being accompanied by some stipulation for the admission into their consumption of some of our produce or manufactures, on the payment of a moderate duty. But in my view of the case, we ought not to suffer ourselves to be influenced by such reasoning, since our whole object being to benefit ourselves, our inquiry is naturally confined to the consideration of whether such a mode of acting be really advantageous, independent altogether of what may be done by the governments of other countries. Now, if the measure be really beneficial to us, why shall we withhold from ourselves an advantage, because other States are not yet advanced so far

as we are in the knowledge of their own interests, or have not attained the power of carrying their own views into practice?"

In the last sentence of this letter, the writer has, I believe, stated the real grounds which may still, for some time, prevent foreign States from following our example, namely, "their ignorance of their own true interests, or their incompetence to carry their own views into effect." But, let my right honourable friend, the chancellor of the Exchequer, continue his good practice of coming down to this House, session after session, to accumulate fresh proofs, that the removal of restrictive impositions and excessive duties is not diminution, but, frequently, increase of revenue:—Let foreign countries see him, year after year (and I hope he will long be able to do so), largely remitting public burthens, and, at the same time, exhibiting a prosperous Exchequer, still flowing to the same perennial level; and, I have no doubt, when the Governments of the Continent shall have contemplated, for a few years longer, the happy consequences of the system in which we are now proceeding, that their eyes will be opened. They will, then, believe—but, at present they do not,—that we are sincere and consistent in our principles; and, for their own advantage, they will then imitate us in our present course, as they have, of late, been adopting our cast-off system of restrictions and prohibitions. That they have, hitherto, suspected our sincerity, and looked upon our professions as lures to ensnare them, is not very surprising, when they compared those professions with that code of prohibition which I am now endeavouring to pare down and modify to a scale of moderate duties. At the same time, as a stimulus to other countries to adopt principles of reciprocity, I shall think it right, to reserve a power of making an addition of one-fifth to the proposed duties, upon the productions of those countries which may refuse, upon a tender by us of the like advantages, to place our commerce and navigation upon the footing of the most favoured nation. I need scarcely add, that no part of these arrangements will interfere with the power of the Crown, to enter into specific treaties of commerce with particular States, by which treaties the duties now proposed may be still further varied or modified, subject always to the approbation of Parliament.

Having now stated the alterations which I intend to propose, with regard to the protecting and prohibitory duties, I have only to add that, with a view to give the British manufacturer every fair advantage in the competition with which he has to contend in the foreign market, it is desirable to consider how far this object can be promoted, by a reduction of some of the duties now levied upon the raw materials, which he is obliged to use in his manufacture.

During the exigencies of the late war, duties were laid, or increased, upon various articles used in dyeing. The revenue derived from these duties is not considerable: but, in proportion to the amount of the charge, must be the increased price of the manufactured commodity. Be that charge, upon our woollen cloths, for instance, only one or two per cent., even this small addition in the present open competition of the foreign market, may turn the scale against us, and ought therefore to be withdrawn. On most of the articles in question, I shall propose a large reduction in the existing rate of duty. They are so numerous that I shall not weary the patience of the Committee, by mentioning them specifically; they will all be found in the Schedule, which will form part of the intended Resolutions. To one or two articles, however, not included under the class of dyeing drugs, I must beg leave shortly to refer. Olive oil is very much used in the manufacture of the finer woollen cloths. The duty upon it was somewhat more than doubled during the war. I propose to reduce it to a rate rather below that of the year 1790; from 15*l*. 13*s*., the present duty, to 7*l*. a tun. This will be a great relief to the manufacturer. There is another species of oil, extracted from rape seed, largely used in the preparation of the coarse woollens, upon which I also propose to give relief. The Committee may perhaps recollect, that, a few years ago, when the panic of agricultural distress was in full force,—when fears were openly expressed in this House, that England must cease to grow corn (and fear, it is said, is seldom a wise counsellor), it was suggested, that the raising of rape seed might become a profitable substitute; and, upon this suggestion, a duty, almost prohibitory, was laid on foreign seed, which till then had been imported free from any charge. This measure, of which the benefit, if beneficial at all, was confined to a very few districts of the kingdom, has certainly contributed nothing to the revival of our agriculture, but it has, in various ways, been attended with detriment to our manufactures. It has greatly injured the manufacture of rape oil and rape cake in this country, and it has increased the price of the former to the woollen trade. The cake, indeed, being wanted for agricultural purposes, is allowed to come in from abroad nearly duty free; so that, in this instance, and to this extent, our recent policy has been to prohibit the raw material, and to encourage its importation in a manufactured state. I propose to revert to our ancient policy in respect to this article; and, after giving a certain time to the dealers to get rid of their stock in hand, to allow the free importation of rape seed, upon a duty which will be merely nominal. The only other article, which I think it necessary to mention, is wool. The duty is now one penny a pound upon all foreign wool. It has been

stated to me, that even this rate of duty presses severely upon the manufacturers of coarse woollens, in which we have most to fear from foreign competition, and that considerable relief would be afforded by reducing it to one-half, upon all wool, not exceeding the value of one shilling a pound. I therefore propose to make this alteration, by which, I am assured, the quantity of coarse wool imported into this country, to be mixed in the manufacture with our own long wool, is likely to be greatly increased.

All these reductions I consider to be right and proper in principle; but, as measures calculated to afford encouragement and assistance to our manufacturers, I am particularly anxious to propose them at the same time when I am bringing forward other measures, not unlikely, till better understood, to excite alarm in particular quarters. Some of the duties which I am now dealing with, I am aware, were imposed for the purposes of revenue; it may, therefore, be thought, that in repealing them, I am travelling out of my own department, and encroaching, in some degree, upon that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But my right honourable friend, I have no doubt, will forgive me where the pecuniary sacrifice is trifling, and the relief to our manufactures the more important consideration. He, I am sure, will allow me to consider myself, however humble, as a fellow-labourer with him in the same vineyard. Whilst I am pruning away the useless and unsound branches, which bear, at best, but a scanty and bad crop, my object is to draw forth new and vigorous shoots, likely to afford better and more abundant fruit; the harvest of which, I trust, it will be his lot, hereafter, to present to his applauding country, in the shape of further relief from taxation.

I now come to the last of the three heads, into which I have divided the subject, to be submitted to the Committee,—the means of affording some further encouragement to the Shipping and Navigation of the empire. There is already a bill on the table which will contribute very essentially to the relief of that important interest. I mean the bill which repeals all the quarantine duties. They operated as a very considerable burthen, unfairly placed on the particular ships and goods which were compelled to perform quarantine. This was a precaution adopted, not for the special advantage of those engaged in any particular trade,—on the contrary, to them the detention and loss of time were great inconveniences, however unavoidable,—but for the general protection and safety of the community. The Committee of Foreign Trade was, therefore, perfectly justified in recommending that the expense of quarantine should be borne by the country at large, and not by any particular class in it; and a Bill has brought in, accordingly, by my right honourable friend, the President of the Board of Trade. Another measure of

substantial relief, now in contemplation, I have already mentioned to the House, but I am convinced, from the communications which I have since received, that I, then, underrated its importance. That measure is the abolition of Fees upon Shipping and Trade in our colonies. Besides the vexation and liability to abuse, inseparable from the present system, I know that, in many instances, the fees alone, upon a ship and cargo, amount to much more than all the public duties collected upon the same.

The next measure, which I have to propose, is the repeal of the Stamp Duty now payable upon the transfer of a whole ship, or of any share in a ship, from one person to another. A ship, I believe, is the only chattel upon which a duty of this sort attaches, as often as it changes hands. I can trace no reason for this anomaly, except one, which ought rather to be a plea for exemption. From motives of State policy, we compel the owner, or part-owner of any ship, to register his interest or share therein. From this registry the ship-owner derives no advantage—on the contrary, however improved the forms and regulations now observed, it is at best to him troublesome, and more or less obnoxious to litigation. By consolidating and amending the registry laws, I have done every thing in my power to mitigate those inconveniences, but still every transfer must be registered. Now, to take advantage of a law, which compels the names of all owners to be registered, in order to attach a heavy stamp duty on every transfer that may be made in the ownership, is an unnecessary aggravation of a necessary inconvenience, and in itself a great injustice. I shall, therefore, submit a resolution for abolishing the whole of this transfer duty upon shipping, by which I shall, at once, relieve the owners of this description of property from a partial tax, and from some degree of annoyance.

There is also another stamp duty, in respect to which I am anxious to afford relief. I mean the duty on Debentures for the payment of Drawbacks, and on Bonds, given by the merchants, for the due delivery of the goods which they have declared for exportation. I propose this relief, partly, upon the same principle as that which I have stated in respect to the transfer of ships. These bonds are not entered into for the benefit of the merchant, but for the security of the Revenue; besides, from their being *ad valorem* stamps, they frequently lead to great abuses and perjury. I will not trouble the Committee with details upon this subject. I propose to reduce these stamps to a fixed duty of only 5s. upon each instrument.

As connected with the same subject,—the relief of our commerce and shipping from direct pecuniary charges,—I beg leave now to call the attention of the Committee to the change which I shall propose in the system of our Consular establishments in

foreign ports. These establishments are regulated by no fixed principle, in respect to the mode of remunerating the individuals employed in this branch of the public service. In one port, the consul receives a salary,—in another he is paid exclusively by fees,—in a third, he receives both a salary and fees. There is no general rule in this respect, applicable even to the whole of the same country. The consuls at Havre and Marseilles have no salaries. The consul at Bourdeaux has a salary, and is allowed fees. The consul at Antwerp has a salary. The consul at Rotterdam has none. The consul at Stettin has a salary. The consul at Dantzic none. At Madeira, the consul has a salary,—at the Azores none. The scale of fees, the principle upon which they are levied, the authority for enforcing their payment, and the mode of levying them, appear to be quite as various and unsettled as the mode of remuneration. In some ports, the fees attach upon the vessel,—in others, upon the merchandize. In some ports, vessels pay all alike, without regard to their tonnage,—in others, the fees are rated in proportion to the size of the vessel. In some ports, again, the fees are an *ad valorem* charge upon the cargo,—in others, so much per ton upon the freight, without regard to its value. Now, not only all this discrepancy in the details of the same establishment cannot be right, and would require revision; but I am of opinion, that the whole principle of providing for our consuls, by authorising them to levy a tax upon the shipping and commerce of the country, is wrong. In the first place, the foreign trade of the country is one of its great public interests, and as much entitled to be protected at the public expense, as far as it wants protection in foreign countries, as any other great interest. In the next place, in the performance of many of the duties for which consuls are appointed, the ship-owner and merchant have no direct or exclusive interest. The navigation laws, the quarantine laws, instead of being advantageous, are inconveniently restrictive to trade; yet to these it is the peculiar duty of the consuls to attend. They have other essential duties to discharge, in which the merchant and the ship-owner have no interest, distinct from that of the whole community. It, therefore, appears to me, that it would be just as reasonable to tax English travellers, in foreign countries, for the support of our political missions, by which they are protected, as it is to tax the shipping or the trade, for the payment of our consular establishments. My object is, to grant to all our consuls fixed and moderate salaries, to be paid out of the public purse; such salaries to vary, of course, according to the importance and responsibility of the station, to the country in which the consul may reside, and other circumstances, which must, from time to time, come under the consideration of the Government. In the civil list,

which is granted for the life of the Sovereign, a sum of 40,000*l.* is allotted for the payment of consular expenses. A considerable part of this sum is required for the salaries of certain officers, designated as consuls, but who are, at the same time, diplomatic agents: I mean our residents at Algiers, and the other courts on the coast of Africa, in the Mediterranean. As the remainder of this sum will fall far short of what will be necessary for the payment of the whole consular charge, I propose that the difference should be voted annually by this House, upon estimates to be laid before us by the proper department.

If this change should be approved of by the House, the effect will be the abolition, generally, of all the present fees payable to our consuls, either upon ships or goods, in foreign ports. Certain small fees would still remain for personal acts that a consul may be called upon to perform, such as notarial instruments, and other documents to which his attestation or signature may be required. Those fees will be specified in the Bill, and will be reduced to the most moderate amount. In regard to another expense, provided for, in certain ports, by a tax upon shipping,—I mean the maintenance of a place of worship, the payment of a chaplain, and other charges of that description,—I trust, that the British merchants and inhabitants, residing at, or resorting to, those ports, will find no difficulty in raising, by a small voluntary rate among themselves, a sufficient sum for these purposes. But, as an encouragement to them to provide the means of performing the important duties of religion, I shall propose, in the Bill, to give a power to the Government, to advance a sum equal to the amount of any subscription which may be so raised, either for erecting a place of worship, providing a burial ground, or allotting a suitable salary to a chaplain, in any foreign port, where a British consul may reside.

Having now stated the outlines of the plan, which I have to propose, for the improvement of our consular system, it only remains for me to mention one other subject, in immediate connexion with it, and certainly of great importance to a very valuable branch of our foreign trade;—I mean our trade to those countries, which are known under the name of the Levant. This trade was placed under the direction of a chartered company, so far back as the reign of James I. Great privileges were conferred upon that company; and they had also important duties to perform. Among their privileges, they were allowed to appoint all the consuls to the Levant, and to levy considerable duties on all British ships resorting to those countries, for the maintenance of those consuls, and the other expenses of their establishment. They also obtained, partly by Acts of Parliament, and partly by treaty and concession from the Porte, the right of exercising, by

their agents and consuls, a very extensive jurisdiction over all British subjects in the Turkish dominions. These powers and trusts have been exercised by the servants of the Company for two centuries, often under very difficult circumstances; and, generally speaking, with great correctness, fidelity, and discretion. In the present state, however, of a great part of the countries in which these consuls reside, and looking, moreover, to our relations with Turkey, as well as with other powers, to the delicate and important questions of international law, which must constantly arise out of the intercourse of commerce with a country in a state of civil war,—questions involving discussions, not only with the contending parties in that country, but with other trading and neutral powers,—it is impossible not to feel that, upon political considerations alone, it is highly expedient that the public servants of this country, in Turkey, should hold their appointments from the Crown. It is to the Crown that foreign powers will naturally look for regulating and controlling the conduct of those officers, in the exercise of their authority; and it is certainly most fit, not only on this account, but for the due maintenance of that authority, that they should be named, not by a trading company, however respectable, but, like other consuls, directly by the Crown, advised, as it must be in their selection, by its responsible servants.

If this change in the mode of appointing the consuls in the Levant be called for upon political grounds, it would be highly absurd not to take advantage of the occasion to bring them, in all other respects, under the regulations of the new consular establishment. It becomes the more important not to neglect this opportunity of affording relief to the Levant trade, as the dues, which the company is authorized to levy, are very considerable, amounting to a tax not much short of two per cent. upon the whole of that trade; a charge quite sufficient, in these times, to divert a considerable part of it from the shipping of this country to that of other States. It is due to the noble lord* who is at the head of the Levant company, to state, that, as soon as this subject was brought under his consideration, he manifested the greatest readiness to assist the views of Government in respect to the proposed changes. Nothing less was to be expected from this distinguished individual, who, in his dignified retirement, still interests himself, with the feelings of a statesman, and the wisdom of a philosopher, in the progress of those sound commercial principles, which, in their application, have already conferred so much benefit upon this country. This noble lord called together the company over which he presides, and proposed to them a

* Lord Grenville.

voluntary surrender of the charter which they had enjoyed for two hundred years. In the most praiseworthy manner, the company acquiesced in this suggestion. His Majesty will be advised to accept the surrender so tendered; but it cannot be carried into effect without an act of parliament. Among other requisite arrangements to be provided for by the bill, will be the transfer of a fund which the company has accumulated out of their revenue, and the abolition of the taxes by which that revenue was produced.

I have now travelled over the wide field of the alterations, which I undertook to submit to the Committee, in the commercial concerns of this country. I wish that my statement, to many members of this House comparatively uninteresting, had been more perspicuous, for the sake of those who have paid attention to this subject. I was desirous to bring it under consideration before the recess, in order that the details might be dispassionately and generally considered by the several interests throughout the country, which are likely to be affected by the measures which I have now proposed. They are open to alterations, and to amendment. I shall be happy to pay every attention in my power to whatever suggestions may be transmitted to me, from any quarter, for this purpose. All I ask now of the Committee is, to take under their protection the comprehensive principle of the system which I have ventured to recommend, and that, so far, they will look upon it as a state measure, connected with the public prosperity. If, to this extent, it shall receive their steady countenance and support, this session will not close without our having proved to this, as well as to other countries, that we have not lost sight of the recommendation from the throne—to remove as much, and as fast as possible, all unnecessary restrictions upon trade.

Mr. Alderman Thompson expressed his hearty concurrence in the propositions laid down by the right honourable, the President of the Board of Trade; whose luminous exposition of the genuine principles of our commercial policy must excite the admiration of every friend of the country. Mr. Baring observed, that what he most approved of in the proposed alterations was, that they went upon general principles, without any undue regard to private interests. Great Britain, as the principal commercial country of the world, ought to set the example of free trade to other nations. Sir Henry Parnell hoped the right honourable gentleman would not stop in his career, until he had given the country, really and substantially, the full benefit of a perfectly free system of trade. Sir H. Vivian, adverting to the proposed duty on foreign books, said, that if the present duties were removed, all copyrights in this country would be done away with. Even at present, French and German editions of our popular northern novels might be had abroad much under the price at which they could be sold in England.

Mr. HOSKISSON said, he was anxious to set himself right with the committee, as to his intention with respect to the reduction of the duty on foreign books. The honourable member must surely be aware, that the Copyright Act gave full protection to such works as those given to the world by the "Great Unknown;" and, indeed, to all who thought proper to avail themselves of the protection of that act. He was aware that those delightful works were printed and sold in every city of France and Germany; but if it could be shown that a single copy of these works published abroad was sold here, the person selling it was liable to an action of damages. With respect to the books of which there was no copyright, he could see no reason why a monopoly should be allowed here, or why the people of England, who wished to read such books, should not be allowed to purchase them at the cheapest rate.

He would offer one word upon what had been said, with respect to the repeal of the duties on foreign copper. He had formerly stated, that in case the duty of 27*l*. per ton on copper should be so high as to raise the price of that article in this country to an extravagant degree, he should feel himself at liberty, acting upon the principle which he had already laid down, to reduce that duty still lower. He did not believe that such would be the effect of the proposed reduction. But, in order to set himself right with the Committee, he would add, that his only object was to protect the miner on the one hand, while on the other he took care that the interests of the country should be attended to, by allowing the importation of copper to take place, when the increased price at home required it.

As to the iron trade, which an honourable member had alluded to, the fact was, that the present duty on old iron was 17*s*. 6*d*. per ton. This sort of iron was that which, in the trade, was known by the designation of scrap iron, and the duty in question he should propose to reduce to 12*s*. a ton. If he were to make too great a difference between the duties on the two sorts of iron, there would be an endeavour to bring all the species under the operation of the duty affecting this inferior description.

With regard to the timber-trade, he was surprised that the honourable gentleman who had the other night presented a strong petition to the House in favour of the reduction of the duty on Cape wines, on the ground of their being the production of one of our own colonies, should now argue, in fact, against the protection afforded to the timber trade of Canada. Why! he must recollect that Canadian timber, considering that it grew in one of our own colonies, and was transported in our own ships, was not valuable trade to Great Britain. And as an additional argument why the existing duties on other timber should not be

further reduced, he would just observe, that there was no trade which, by reason of increased demand, had lately attained a more improved and prosperous condition, than the trade in Baltic timber. The Board of Trade would shortly, he trusted, be able to consider the proper steps to be taken for equalizing the duties on timber; which he believed would be the same as those that were now pursued in Ireland, where the mode of estimating such duties was by tale, instead of by estimation of the quantity of timber contained in any given number of planks. In conclusion, he begged to repeat, that he could not accede to the suggestions of the honourable member for Montrose; inasmuch as no trade was more flourishing at present than the rival trade (as with respect to Canada it might be called) of Baltic timber.

The several Resolutions were agreed to.

COMBINATION LAWS.

MARCH 29th, 1825.

In pursuance of the notice he had given,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose, he said, with considerable regret, to call the attention of the House to a subject that was of the highest importance to the commercial interests of this empire, but which, in consequence, as he apprehended, of some misconstruction that prevailed among certain classes in this country, in respect of a legislative proceeding of the last session, repealing the Combination Laws, seemed likely to be attended with most inconvenient and dangerous consequences. He certainly considered, that the parties immediately interested in that proceeding had been subsequently acting under a misconstruction of the intentions of the legislature. Nevertheless, in the motion with which he meant to conclude this evening, he did not propose to suggest that the old laws against the combinations of workmen or labourers against their employers should be again put in force. Those laws were, many of them, oppressive and cruel in their operation on workmen; and he had always advocated the principle of allowing every man to dispose of his labour to the best advantage,—which principle they, in very many instances, had directly violated.

The right honourable gentleman then proceeded to advert to the bringing in of the 5th of George IV. c. 95, and to the avowed objects of that bill. He felt himself bound to admit that in principle those objects seemed to be perfectly fair and proper to be established, as between workmen and their employers; but he was satisfied that they were not so in practice. Moreover, he doubted whether the act in question, as long as it should continue to exist, would not have a strong tendency to keep up between workmen and their employers a spirit, on one side of alarm, and on the other of distrust. But he would briefly review the course and effect of that proceeding. It commenced by a motion introduced by an honourable gentleman on the opposite side of the House,* who pointed out the hardships to which, under the then subsisting laws, journeymen and others were liable; and there could be no doubt that, in too many cases, those laws were, in a great degree, unjust and prejudicial in their operation. A Committee

* Mr. Hume.

was accordingly granted to the motion of the honourable gentleman, in which it was proposed to go largely into evidence, and inquiries on those topics. It was a very full committee, consisting of about fifty members; and it undoubtedly examined a vast variety of evidence, upon all questions connected with the main intention of its labours.

The result of those labours was—not that a report was made to that House (which, as he thought, would have been the most desirable course), stating the grounds upon which the Committee had come to the conclusion of recommending the introduction of their bill, and thereby affording to the public, and in a more especial manner to Parliament, the necessary information as to the motives which induced them to recommend such a change of the existing law;—but the result was, that the Committee adopted finally a string of resolutions, which involved no such statement whatever. He should inform the House, that he was himself a member of that Committee; and perhaps he ought to mention that circumstance with considerable regret, owing to the fact of numerous other engagements and avocations of an official nature, in which he was all that time extremely busied, having prevented him from paying that degree of attention to the business of the Committee, which he could have wished to do, and which the importance of its inquiries most undoubtedly demanded. To the same causes he must refer the indulgence of the House, while he stated, that they had equally precluded him, when the bill in question was brought into the House, from considering it with all the attention and care, in its various stages, that it deserved to be considered with. And he might go further, and express his regret, that those of its enactments which were of a legal nature had not possibly been discussed with all the technical knowledge which might have been beneficially applied to them by those honourable and learned friends of his, of whose professional assistance in ordinary cases Government had the benefit.

The consequence of this had been, that some of the provisions of the bill, which afterwards passed into an act, were of a very extraordinary nature. Not only did the bill repeal all former statutes relative to combinations and conspiracies of workmen, but it even provided, that no proceedings should be had at common law on account of any such combination, meeting, conspiracy, or uniting together of journeymen, &c., for, in fact, almost any purpose: and thus, by one clause, it went to preclude the possibility of applying any legal remedy to a state of things, which might become, and which had since become, a great public evil. Now this fact was the more curious, inasmuch as the honourable member who introduced the bill, had himself taken occasion to

state, both in that House and in the Committee, on what he considered to be legal authority,—and he, in common, he was sure, with every honourable gentleman who heard him, would readily allow that the honourable and learned member for Peterborough* was indeed high legal authority—that if all the statutes relative to combinations were to be repealed, he thought the operation of the common law alone would be quite sufficient to repress, among workmen, any dangerous and injurious tendency improperly or violently to combine against their masters. The bill itself, however, repealing thirty or forty acts of Parliament, and in this singular manner putting aside the common law altogether, was brought into the house at a late period of the session; passed through its stage, subsequent to the first reading, on Wednesday the 2d of June; and on Saturday the 5th of June, only four days after the second reading, and in the same week, was read a third time and passed, without any discussion. The measure was therefore hurried on with as much expedition as was usually applied to the most pressing bills.

To the honourable gentleman himself he imputed no blame for thus speeding his Bill through the House of Commons. Looking to the advanced period of the session, and the discussion which it had received in the Committee, it was natural enough that he should desire it to go through the House with all this expedition. But, since the passing of the Act in question, it had happened to him, in his official capacity, to receive information of the conduct adopted by bodies of workmen in various parts of the country. They were, many of them, very painful accounts; and to his right honourable friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, numerous reports had been forwarded, detailing acts of outrage and violence, on the part of the workmen combined against their employers, of the most disgraceful character. His right honourable friend had permitted him to inspect those reports; and he could state, that they manifested, in all those classes of workmen who had misconceived the real object of the legislature in the late Act, a disposition to combine against the masters, and a tendency to proceedings destructive of the property and business of the latter, which, if left to itself, and permitted to remain unchecked, must terminate in producing the greatest mischiefs to the country. Indeed, those mischiefs were rapidly growing, in some districts, to so alarming a pitch, that if their progress was not speedily repressed and interrupted, they would very soon become rather a subject for his right honourable friend to deal with in the exercise of his official functions, than for him to call

* Mr. Scarlett.

the attention of the House to, in this manner. These things could not remain much longer in their present condition. Unless Parliament should interfere to place them on a different footing, his right honourable friend—armed as he was by the State, with the authority of calling in aid to the civil power (where that proceeding was necessary by the urgency of the case), for the protection of the property and liberty of the King's subjects—would find himself necessitated so to interpose against what he could not but consider a very formidable conspiracy in certain bodies of men, calculated to place that liberty and property, and perhaps life itself, in great jeopardy, as regarded certain individuals, who employed large numbers of labourers and journeymen. But, by a timely inquiry into, and consideration of, the subject, Parliament might be enabled to deal with it, as with a question merely of commercial policy.

He wished to treat it as a question, on the one hand, of the freedom of labour, looking to the right which every man naturally claimed to exercise over his own labour; and, on the other, as a question upon the effect of those principles that had formerly prevailed in this country, with regard to the right in those claiming this freedom of labour, of interfering with, and exercising a control over, parties largely employing such labour. But, he must beg to repeat his conviction, that if Parliament did not very soon interfere to reconsider the whole of this question, in all these branches, they would find that the evil which was already existing, would quickly attain an extremely mischievous height. They would then be obliged to apply to it other means and another remedy. If such should unfortunately ever be the case, he did hope that his right honourable friend would not only not be backward to employ those means and that power with which he was vested for the removal of the evil he spoke of, but that, if necessary, he would apply to Parliament to be furnished with further powers to prevent the baneful operation of a tyranny, as he must call it, that was now exercised over a great portion of the property, and the liberty of some of his Majesty's subjects, in many parts of the country.

But, while he thus designated the character of those combinations which had been so extensively formed by men who were obviously proceeding altogether in error, he did trust, that on account of what he had been saying, he should not be considered as a person who was at all hostile—nay, who was not friendly—to the right of labour—to the right which every man, generally speaking, had, to dispose of his labour and skill to the best advantage, or as he might think proper. As a general principle, he undoubtedly thought that every man had a fair inherent right to carry his own labour to whatever market he pleased, and so to

make the best of it; and, accordingly, he had always maintained that labour was the poor man's capital. But then, on the other hand, he must as strenuously contend for the perfect freedom of those who were to give employment to that labour. Theirs was the property which rendered that labour necessary—theirs was the machinery on which that labour was to be employed—theirs was the capital by which its employment was to be paid for. At least, therefore, they were entitled to equal freedom of action; and that property, that machinery, and that capital, ought to be as sacred and unfettered, as the labour which was the admitted property of the workman. If their right, and title, and freedom in all these matters could not be sustained; so neither could there be kept and retained in the country the means of employing labour; and the workmen themselves would be the victims of a delusive system of attempted influence and intimidation over the employers.

He would not unnecessarily detain the House by entering at any length into details, to show that such a system was, in several quarters, now acted upon. Meetings had been held, and associations formed, in different parts of the country, which, if persevered in and prosecuted successfully, must terminate in the ruin and destruction of the very men who were parties to them. Now, as to the individuals who had adopted measures of this kind, it might not be immaterial to advert to one or two papers that he held in his hand, which pretty clearly developed what were their own views, and what their own proposals, in respect of this right which they had assumed of interference with the property and the concerns of their employers. The first which he had with him was entitled, "The Articles of Regulation of the Operative Colliers of Lanark and Dumbarton." The second was a similar production of the Ayrshire Association; and he could produce a great number of such rules and articles and regulations, each body of them absolutely forming as regular a constitution, as any of those which we were now almost daily reading of, as arising from the new governments that were springing up in every part of the world. These associations had their delegates, their presidents, their committees of management, and every other sort of functionary comprised in the plan of a government. By the ninth article of one of the sets of regulations, it was provided, "that the delegates from all the different works should assemble at one and the same place," on certain stated occasions: so that the House would perceive, that this provision regarded not a combination of all the workmen of one employer against him, or even of one whole trade against the masters; but something more formidable and extensive in its nature—namely, a systematic union of the workmen of many different trades, and a delegation

from each of them to one central meeting. Thus there was established, as against the employers, a formal system of delegation, a kind of federal republic—all the trades being represented by delegates, who formed a sort of Congress. Another regulation was to this effect—"Each delegate shall be paid out of his own work" (the earnings which he was to be permitted to make, and of which a portion was subscribed by every member having employment for the purposes of these associations), "with these exceptions only—the President" (or the head of this Government), "the Secretary, and the Treasurer are to be paid out of the general funds: the delegates are elected for six months, and may be re-elected." So that here was a tax levied upon each workman for the maintenance of general funds applicable to purposes of this mischievous character.

But he would particularly call the attention of the House to the eleventh article; inasmuch as it clearly demonstrated the real meaning and intentions of the societies thus constituted. "It is the duty of these delegates, first, to point out the masters they dislike"—a duty in itself sufficiently dangerous and illegal: "Secondly, to warn such masters"—of what?—"of the danger in which they are placed in consequence of this combination." Here, therefore, was an acknowledgment of the danger of such associations, admitted by themselves. But let the House observe what followed: "And, thirdly, to try every thing which prudence might dictate to put them" (the masters) "out of the trade"—not, let it be observed, every thing which fairness and justice might dictate to workmen who sought really to obtain a redress of grievances; but every thing which "prudence" might dictate. In such a position "prudence" must be understood as implying merely that degree of precaution that might prevent the "Union" from being brought within a breach of the law—such as the crime of murder, for example. Now, was it fit, or right, or reasonable, that persons engaged in commercial or other pursuits—such as mining, for example—should, by combinations thus organized, and by pretensions of this kind, be kept in constant anxiety and terror about their interests and property? In order to show how regularly organised these bodies were, and how they proposed to exercise the mischievous tyranny that he complained of, over such masters as might happen to be placed within the sphere of their control, he would just allude to the thirteenth article:—"These articles may be modified and altered at any meeting of the delegates: and if sanctioned at such meeting by two-thirds of the delegates present, they shall be final. The power of levying money from all the members of the association must be left to the general committee." So that these were not to be voluntary, but compulsory contributions, actually "levied" upon

their agents and consuls, a very extensive jurisdiction over all British subjects in the Turkish dominions. These powers and trusts have been exercised by the servants of the Company for two centuries, often under very difficult circumstances; and, generally speaking, with great correctness, fidelity, and discretion. In the present state, however, of a great part of the countries in which these consuls reside, and looking, moreover, to our relations with Turkey, as well as with other powers, to the delicate and important questions of international law, which must constantly arise out of the intercourse of commerce with a country in a state of civil war,—questions involving discussions, not only with the contending parties in that country, but with other trading and neutral powers,—it is impossible not to feel that, upon political considerations alone, it is highly expedient that the public servants of this country, in Turkey, should hold their appointments from the Crown. It is to the Crown that foreign powers will naturally look for regulating and controlling the conduct of those officers, in the exercise of their authority; and it is certainly most fit, not only on this account, but for the due maintenance of that authority, that they should be named, not by a trading company, however respectable, but, like other consuls, directly by the Crown, advised, as it must be in their selection, by its responsible servants.

If this change in the mode of appointing the consuls in the Levant be called for upon political grounds, it would be highly absurd not to take advantage of the occasion to bring them, in all other respects, under the regulations of the new consular establishment. It becomes the more important not to neglect this opportunity of affording relief to the Levant trade, as the dues, which the company is authorized to levy, are very considerable, amounting to a tax not much short of two per cent. upon the whole of that trade; a charge quite sufficient, in these times, to divert a considerable part of it from the shipping of this country to that of other States. It is due to the noble lord* who is at the head of the Levant company, to state, that, as soon as this subject was brought under his consideration, he manifested the greatest readiness to assist the views of Government in respect to the proposed changes. Nothing less was to be expected from this distinguished individual, who, in his dignified retirement, still interests himself, with the feelings of a statesman, and the wisdom of a philosopher, in the progress of those sound commercial principles, which, in their application, have already conferred so much benefit upon this country. This noble lord called together the company over which he presides, and proposed to them :

* Lord Grenville.

voluntary surrender of the charter which they had enjoyed for two hundred years. In the most praiseworthy manner, the company acquiesced in this suggestion. His Majesty will be advised to accept the surrender so tendered; but it cannot be carried into effect without an act of parliament. Among other requisite arrangements to be provided for by the bill, will be the transfer of a fund which the company has accumulated out of their revenue, and the abolition of the taxes by which that revenue was produced.

I have now travelled over the wide field of the alterations, which I undertook to submit to the Committee, in the commercial concerns of this country. I wish that my statement, to many members of this House comparatively uninteresting, had been more perspicuous, for the sake of those who have paid attention to this subject. I was desirous to bring it under consideration before the recess, in order that the details might be dispassionately and generally considered by the several interests throughout the country, which are likely to be affected by the measures which I have now proposed. They are open to alterations, and to amendment. I shall be happy to pay every attention in my power to whatever suggestions may be transmitted to me, from any quarter, for this purpose. All I ask now of the Committee is, to take under their protection the comprehensive principle of the system which I have ventured to recommend, and that, so far, they will look upon it as a state measure, connected with the public prosperity. If, to this extent, it shall receive their steady countenance and support, this session will not close without our having proved to this, as well as to other countries, that we have not lost sight of the recommendation from the throne—to remove as much, and as fast as possible, all unnecessary restrictions upon trade.

Mr. Alderman Thompson expressed his hearty concurrence in the propositions laid down by the right honourable, the President of the Board of Trade; whose luminous exposition of the genuine principles of our commercial policy must excite the admiration of every friend of the country. Mr. Baring observed, that what he most approved of in the proposed alterations was, that they went upon general principles, without any undue regard to private interests. Great Britain, as the principal commercial country of the world, ought to set the example of free trade to other nations. Sir Henry Parnell hoped the right honourable gentleman would not stop in his career, until he had given the country, really and substantially, the full benefit of a perfectly free system of trade. Sir H. Vivian, adverting to the proposed duty on foreign books, said, that if the present duties were removed, all copyrights in this country would be done away with. Even at present, French and German editions of our popular northern novels might be had abroad much under the price at which they could be sold in England.

have her ballast shifted; but it so happened, that one of the regulations to be found in this dialogue between Tom and Harry purported, that it was unworthy a seaman to assist in shifting ballast. The consequence was, that on the occasion he was speaking of, all the men were in a state of insubordination and mutiny; and, if some craft had not come up to the vessel's assistance, it was impossible to say what mischief might have ensued to her. As soon as the ballast had been shifted by the craft's hands, the men immediately returned to their duty, and navigated the vessel as before. What, however, was the result of their refusal to shift the ballast? The men in the craft who had performed that service claimed salvage. A sum of 200*l.* was awarded to them on account of salvage; which, of course, the owners were obliged to pay, the salvors themselves unanimously declaring, that the danger of the ship and cargo was occasioned by, in fact, the adherence of the crew to one of the rules of this "Seamen's Union." If any man after this could be found to affirm that such principles and such conduct were not matter for the interference of Parliament, he would only say, that Parliament had better at once resign every idea of giving protection to any species of property.

He was really not surprised, notwithstanding, when he looked at the way in which the act of last session was worded, and the artful misconstruction that might easily be put upon it by those who best knew how to mislead and deceive the men who had engaged in these combinations, that those men should have erroneously supposed their proceedings to be warranted under this act. The act, as he had before intimated, repealed all former statutes, and so on; and it then enacted, that no proceedings at common law should be had by reason of any combinations or conspiracies of workmen formerly punishable under those repealed statutes. The House would perceive, that the second section declared, "that journeymen, workmen, and other persons, who shall hereafter enter into any combination to obtain higher rate of wages," and so forth; "or to regulate the mode of carrying on any manufacture, trade, or business, or the management thereof, shall not be subject or liable to any indictment or prosecution for a criminal conspiracy or combination, or to any other proceeding or punishment whatever, or under the common statute law." Now, would not any one, on reading this sentence, suppose it was something really proper, and almost commendable, for workmen to combine and conspire together to regulate and control the management of any manufacture? And accordingly,—without imputing to the framers of the bill the slightest on their parts, that such a misapprehension could ever be attained,—he did not doubt that a great proportion of the

associated and combined workmen in the country did actually believe, that so far from violating the law, this clause proved that they had been only pursuing a course that was strictly conformable with the meaning of the legislature. If, then, it was only to set these men right, it would be highly proper that some inquiry should be forthwith instituted with this view, and that the Committee charged to make it should report to the House what would be the most eligible steps to be adopted in consequence.

He would next offer a word or two on the fifth section of the same act. That section provided, not that any such combination or conspiracy should be visited with any punishment, or be made matter of legal cognizance, but "that if any person shall hereafter by threats deter a man from his hiring, or engage in any combination or conspiracy to destroy any machinery, goods, wares, or merchandizes, he shall, upon being convicted of such offence before a magistrate, on the evidence of any two witnesses, be punished with two months' imprisonment." Now, it surely did not require any act of Parliament—(he was speaking in the presence of his honourable and learned friend the Attorney-General, who would correct him if he was wrong)—to declare, that to deter a man by threats from his hiring, or to destroy, or combine and conspire for the destruction of goods or machinery, was an offence to be made punishable in a certain way, upon conviction. Such acts were already offences by the law of the land, independent of any thing like combination; and in so far, at least, the declarations and provisions of this act were quite supererogatory. By the law of the land some of these offences would be actual felonies; others high misdemeanors. It was equally extraordinary, that the act should require the conviction to be on the oath of two witnesses—two witnesses being necessary only in cases of high treason and perjury—and that the punishment should be limited to two months' imprisonment. Therefore, here was a law that contemplated certain offences which had in themselves nothing, necessarily, to do with the offence of combinations—which regarded quite different questions. But under this act—plotting together for the destruction of machinery—threatening even, which proceeded to menace of life or property, were no longer any criminal offence whatever; and thus, by repealing the combination laws, the acts of plotting and threatening were rendered no criminal offences at all.

Under these circumstances, he must consider that the law of which he had been speaking was not adequate to put down an evil which was increasing to so formidable an extent; not the evil of committing the other offences to which the act had so particularly adverted, but the evil of workmen being permitted to plot, and the bold open avowal of their intention to carry such

permission (as they presumed it to be) into effect, in the kind of manner he had pointed out to the notice of the House—a manner, the most destructive, perhaps, which it was in their power to devise, to the property of their masters and employers. He did conceive that if these misguided men could be induced, for one moment, to reflect upon what must be the inevitable consequences of the course they were pursuing, they must see that such a course of proceeding, if continued, would render it impossible for any body to embark his capital under risks so great as those which he had pointed out; or to submit its application to a system of tyranny and control, which nobody with capital would for a moment choose to endure. If they would reflect on these facts, they would perceive the impossibility of their being left at liberty to pursue the career of violence and combination, in which they were now proceeding; and that they must soon cease altogether to procure employment for their own subsistence. For, so sure as they persevered in their measures, capital must desert the districts in which they were carried on, and ultimately, unless the evil was arrested, the kingdom itself, for other countries.

He would only add, that he would recommend to those who employed numerous workmen, not lightly to submit to such extravagant pretensions, and to feel assured, that if the present prevailing misconstruction of the law should be thought by the workmen to justify those pretensions, the magistrates would give the masters their support against any such demands. If that support should be found still inadequate, his right honourable friend would not fail to afford them such further assistance as might be necessary to protect them from those measures which had so fatal a tendency to destroy the property of the employers, and to dry up the sources of labour to the workmen. In what state the law with regard to combinations should be put—whether the last act, repealing all the old statutes, should in its turn be repealed altogether, or not, he was not at present prepared to suggest, and had not in his own mind determined: but, the necessity for inquiry did not seem on that account the less urgent. He should be very sorry to see all those laws which were formerly in force on this subject, renewed; but it might be well worth their consideration to ascertain, whether something at least more definite and effectual than the existing statute could not be devised—something that might prevent the evil he had been describing from extending itself any further than the point to which it had already arrived. This was a question that deserved the most serious attention of the House.

In the mean time, he felt that in having submitted these matters their consideration, and in calling upon them, in virtue of the relation which he had the honour to fill, to give a more effectual

protection, forthwith, to the property employed in the hire and application of labour, and also to the labour applied to the improvement and increase of property, he was acting in the conscientious discharge of what he believed to be his public duty. He did still indulge the hope, that, by the timely interference of Parliament, they might yet prevent that interruption to the public peace, which must infallibly be the consequence of their remaining any longer inactive spectators of a mischief that was rapidly increasing, and which, if not speedily arrested, must be followed by the most disastrous results. He had trusted, that whatever might be the first ebullition of the feelings of the workmen, on finding themselves emancipated from some of the grievous restraints imposed by the old laws in question on their industry, their own good sense would have instructed them to withdraw from a path, so fraught with difficulties and dangers as that which they had so unwisely adopted. That anticipation he could now, unhappily, no longer indulge; and it was with the hope of thereby doing justice to both parties—the workmen and their employers—that he now moved, “for the appointment of a Select Committee, to inquire into the effect of the act of the 5th George IV., cap. 95, in respect to the conduct of Workmen and others, in different parts of the United Kingdom: and to report their opinion how far it may be necessary to repeal or amend the provisions of the said act.” He was aware that in making this motion he might expose himself to some obloquy, and the expression of much dissatisfaction among some of the parties to whom it related; and particularly in a place where he was most anxious to stand well, and among those who had sent him to that House. However this might be, he had only to do his duty fearlessly and properly; and he had no doubt that upon a little reflection, the same parties would be among those who would feel most obliged to him for having, in this instance at least, performed it.

The motion was agreed to, and a Committee appointed.

COMBINATION LAWS.

MAY 3d, 1825.

On presenting a petition from Northampton, respecting the Combination Law, Mr. Cartwright said, he wished to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether it was in his contemplation to propose any further measure on this subject, during the present session.

Mr. HUSKISSON said, the honourable gentleman had asked him, whether it was intended to propose any measure this session, on a subject which, he agreed with the honourable member, deserved the serious attention of the House. He meant the present state of the country, with regard to the conduct of the Workmen, whose practices, in forming Combinations, were extending themselves to every part of the kingdom. The House were aware, that a Committee was sitting up stairs, for the purpose of investigating the effect produced by the law of last session. That Committee was pursuing its labours with all proper vigilance, and would, he trusted, be in a situation to make a report to the House without the intervention of any great delay. He admitted, with the honourable member, that it was a subject which pressed for decision. It was not his wish, nor that of any gentleman on that Committee, to interfere with the meetings, or combinations, as they were called, of those individuals, so far as related to the amount of their own wages. They were at liberty to take all proper means to secure that remuneration for their labour, to which they conceived they were entitled—to consider the circumstances of a greater demand for labour, or a greater expense incurred in the purchase of provisions. Under circumstances of this nature, they might reasonably ask for larger wages: but, they did not stop here. They combined for purposes of the most unjustifiable description: they combined to dictate to their masters the mode in which they should conduct their business: they combined to dictate whether the master should take an apprentice or not: they combined for the purpose of preventing certain individuals from working, they combined to enforce the principle, that wages should be paid alike to every man, whether he were a good workman or a bad one; and they levied heavy fines on those parties who refused to agree to their conditions.

What he complained of, on the part of the employers, as well as the part of those who were willing to labour, was, that the

persons thus combining not only prevented the employers from carrying on their business with their assistance, but they prevented individuals who wished to work from getting employment at all. He believed that, at the present moment, a great part of the woollen manufacturers were standing still, on account of combinations of this sort. They existed in London, and he understood that they had spread through various parts of the country, to a very extensive degree. He did not wish to resort to the old combination law, or to any measure that would not give equal protection to the employed, as well as to the employer. But unquestionably it was necessary that something should be done to remedy the existing evil. The tyranny of the many would, he apprehended, be allowed to be worse than the tyranny of the few; and he must say, that the conduct of those who kept up these combinations threatened to destroy the peace and prosperity of the manufacturing interests. It was undoubtedly time to remove these evils; and he would, as soon as possible, endeavour to do so, by suggesting some efficient means, for the equal protection of the master and the workman.

ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIEF BILL.

MAY 10th, 1825.

On the order of the day for the third reading of the Bill brought in by Sir Francis Burdett, "to provide for the removal of the Disqualifications under which his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects now labour

Mr. Huskisson rose and spoke as follows:—

After the frequent, the ample, and, above all, the very able discussions which this subject has undergone within the walls of this House, it is with no small degree of hesitation and reluctance that I venture to offer myself to your notice. If some apology be necessary for this intrusion, the only plea which I can offer is one which has been allowed to other individuals in the like situation with myself; namely, that I have hitherto abstained from doing more than give silent votes upon this most important concern. Of these gone-by votes I can only say, that there are none which I have ever given, in the course of a long parliamentary career, to which I look back with a more entire satisfaction, and a more conscientious conviction that they were right, than to those votes which had for their object the furtherance of any measure which has been brought into this House, either for the partial relaxation, or the more general repeal, of those Laws which affect the Roman Catholics.

Not, Sir, that I, any more than other honourable gentlemen who have addressed this House, have done so with any desire to show favour to the Catholics, or to their religion. With the spiritual tenets and doctrines of that religion I have nothing to do—for the practices and pretensions of the Romish hierarchy, either as affecting the relations of private life, or the maintenance and security of civil liberty, especially when those practices and pretensions are backed by the arm of secular power, I certainly feel any thing but partiality or admiration. Neither, Sir, am I, as some who hear me may perhaps be, under any obligation, personal or political, to the followers of that Church; but I do owe it to justice to vote for the repeal of every penal restraining or disqualifying enactment, affecting either the Roman Catholic, or

* This speech, excepting the passages included within brackets, is printed from manuscript notes, found in the hand-writing of Mr. Huskisson since his decease.

any other class of his Majesty's subjects, so soon as it shall appear to me, that the necessity for continuing that enactment, either on account of the evil for which it was a remedy, or the danger which it was intended to avert, shall have ceased to exist.

On this ground, and on this ground only, the Roman Catholics are clearly entitled to my vote. But to my country I owe that vote on other, and with me more important, considerations. To withhold Catholic emancipation, in my judgment, is to keep alive dangerous discontents, which retard the progress of public prosperity in time of peace, which may perhaps render the tenure of that peace less permanent and less secure, and which, in the event of war, must certainly tend to impair those resources, and to divide and distract those energies, which ought to be concentrated and directed, with one common effort, against the public enemy of the State.

I shall confine myself to this brief and general statement of the grounds on which I shall vote for the motion—first, because I am anxious to keep my promise in not taking up the time of the House; and secondly, because I am aware that on this, as on former occasions, the subject has been exhausted; and that every thing which the powers of reason could adduce in the way of argument—every thing which historical research and constitutional learning could bring to bear upon the question, in the way of information—every thing which eloquence and ingenuity could address, either to the generosity or the justice of the House, have more than once been put forth, and more than once successfully, in favour of the cause which I am now endeavouring to advocate.

Trusting, therefore, that these appeals to their reason, to their justice, and to their liberality, will have their due weight in the present discussion, I shall proceed at once to what appears to me the more practical view of the question now under consideration. In that view I shall confine myself to Ireland; for, apart from Ireland, however urgent the claims of the English Catholics, the Catholic question would be one comparatively unimportant, and of far less difficulty in its adjustment.

Sir, I have already said, that I am no admirer of the Catholic religion. I go further; and I have no hesitation to admit, that its existence in Ireland, as the religion of the largest portion of that community, is a very serious public misfortune. Admitting the power and influence claimed by the head of the Romish church to be of a nature merely spiritual, and even if I could admit more fully than I do, that it is easy on all occasions to distinguish spiritual from temporal authority, I should still say, that a hierarchy so numerous and so extensive, of which the head is a foreign potentate, and of which the numerous ramifications, by the practice and doctrines of the Catholic church, pervade the inmost

recesses of every abode, and acquire a knowledge of the most private and secret concerns of every family, is in itself a great evil. But I almost readily avow that it is difficult, in some instances, distinctly to draw the line between spiritual and temporal authority; and I do not deny that in times of ignorance, of violence, and disorder, such times as marked the middle and dark ages of Christendom, those authorities have been confounded, and that they would be again, if the same opportunities occurred of superstition on the one side, and the same temptations to ambition on the other. But, Sir, it would be as unfair to argue from the conduct and pretensions of the Church of Rome in those days, in reference to the present subject of debate, as it would be to argue from the crimes of the old monarchies of the same periods against the principle of limited monarchy, as now happily settled in this country. What should we think of the fairness of a man, who quoted the cruelties of Louis XI. or Charles IX. of France, or the public vices and enormities of some of our own sovereigns of former ages, as a proof that hereditary monarchy was incompatible with political and civil liberty? How many arguments, plausible in the abstract, may be raised against the principle of hereditary monarchy—how many illustrations would history furnish to countenance these arguments! But the answer to them all is in the example of this country—where limited monarchy is much more likely to endure, from the happiness and well-being of the state, than the institutions of the most democratic state in any other part of the world. And why?—Not, Sir, because the sovereigns of this kingdom are not men with all the passions of other men—not, Sir, because the order of nature has been changed in that Family which has now so auspiciously wielded the sceptre of these realms for more than a hundred years—they would spurn any such supposition; but because every member of that illustrious Family is as much alive to the blessings of freedom as any of the other members of the community—is as fully sensible, that the monarch on the throne owes every thing which constitutes his present greatness, and will be his future glory in history, to the constitution of which he is the head, and that that constitution is upheld and rendered secure by the intelligence, as much as it is by the attachment, of all his people. In like manner, Sir, that we have these guarantees for the constitution, against what may be stated to be the inconveniences of hereditary monarchy in the abstract; so we shall have the guarantee of the enlightened state of the Catholic part of our population,—of their attachment to the constitution,—of the present state of intelligence in the world,—of the vigilance of a government, a population, a most learned church establishment,—the guarantee of all our institutions, and not least of all, of a free press and free discussion,

against the revival of those pretensions and that interference, which disgraced the conduct of the Church of Rome, in the darker ages of the world.

Returning, however, to the state of Ireland. I admit that the proportion which there exists between the Protestant and the Catholic parts of the population, would be a great evil in any Protestant state; but that in Ireland, considering the manner in which the Protestant faith was introduced into that kingdom, considering the transfer of the rich endowments of that Church to the Protestant Church, without any corresponding transfer being effected in the opinions and feelings of the people—considering the other forcible changes which have been made in the property of that country, the intensity of that evil is greatly increased. But, Sir, that transfer of property is irrevocable. It is so, not only because it is so declared and provided by the Act of Union; but I am sure that, quite independently of that solemn compact, its inviolability must be maintained by every man who understands the true principles of a free government, and is capable of forming a just estimate of what constitutes its strength and most secure foundation. Sir, the foundation of all government is respect for property. I therefore never will consent to shake that foundation to its very centre, by unsettling one description of property. I could not do so, without leading to the confounding and destruction of property altogether.

I have thought it right to make this declaration, lest the drift of my statement should be misunderstood by any honourable gentleman who hears me; and trusting that every gentleman will give me full credit for the sincerity with which it is made, the practical questions which I have asked myself whenever I have voted on this subject, are,—first, the extent of the evil being admitted, is it one which is likely to wear itself out, or is it not one becoming every day more portentous in size, and more alarming to the best interests of the empire? If, as I think, there can be but one answer to this question, I should next say to this House—Admitting the evil to be growing every day more formidable, is your mind made up, that an evil of this description must take its course, and that there exists no remedy? Sir, it is a good old *dictum* of this House, that nothing is beyond its reach, and that there can be no political evil in the State, for which there is not to be found some remedy. I trust that this principle is not lost sight of by the many, who have hitherto been opposed to Catholic Emancipation; but who, perhaps, from having asked themselves these same questions, begin now to declare, that “something must be done.” I am glad that this feeling is prevalent, and to those in whom it prevails, my next question is—What is that something? Do you hope to convert the Catholics to the

Protestant church? The expectation of it, as a general measure, is too visionary for serious examination, and the chance of it, even in individual cases, and by individual zeal, can scarcely be indulged, so long as the door of fair discussion and investigation is closed, as it always will be, against those who persecute, and endeavour to make converts, at the same time.

If you cannot convert the Catholics, do you hope that growing wealth, diffused education, increasing numbers, the development and expansion of talent among the educated and higher classes, especially those who devote themselves to the learned professions—that the example of other countries, and the support, the sympathy, and the co-operation of so large a portion of the Protestant community in their own,—the countenance which their Claims have received from a majority of this exclusively Protestant House, and from so large a portion of the Other, are likely to make them less eager, and less determined to prosecute those claims, for which they are now petitioners at your bar? No, Sir, you can entertain no such expectation. It is not possible.

Why, then, if something must be done, is it not plain what that something must be? You must disarm the discontent of so many millions, by taking away the cause of that discontent. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that there is some danger in this course, you must ask yourselves, as practical statesmen,—Is not that danger less than that of leaving things as they are? You must ask yourselves, whether the present danger be one which, if let alone, is calculated to alarm men of firm and constant minds? You must ask yourselves, whether the danger which you apprehend be of that description which can reasonably give rise to a similar alarm? Independently of the general knowledge which every man must have of the present state of Ireland as pregnant with alarm, and threatening a constantly growing danger, we have had, in the course of these debates, the reluctant testimony of witnesses, who are certainly not wanting in firmness of nerve, or vigour of intellect, or opportunities of observation. [Let the House look to the opinion of the gallant member for Westmeath. He tells you, that he had violent prejudices upon the subject, and that it was with the utmost reluctance he surrendered them. He tells you of the danger of the present state of things, and that if the measure be not granted that danger cannot be postponed. From his habits of life, the gallant member knows the value of ten thousand well-disciplined troops; and he tells you, that if the question of Catholic Emancipation be carried, it will do more for the peace of Ireland, than you could effect by an augmentation of your forces to that extent.

Upon this part of the subject, I will not offer any opinion; but will consider the question in reference to the wealth and resour-

ces of Ireland. And here I am prepared to maintain, that the cost of the Establishment of 10,000 men is by far the least important part of the question. It was not the saving of that item of expense, but the loss which the country experienced, in consequence of these restrictions on our Roman Catholic fellow subjects—and this was a point which gentlemen who were accustomed to discuss questions of political economy would do well to consider—from the absence of all the benefit which would, under other circumstances, be derived from the employment of millions of English capital in the sister kingdom, which must now be considered as so many millions driven away, or diverted, from those channels of industry and improvement, which might have been so beneficially opened or enlarged.

I am one of those who should unquestionably have rejoiced, if the measure of Catholic Emancipation had been granted, at the time of voting the Union of the two countries. But whatever had, subsequently to that measure, been the misfortunes and the troubles of Ireland, it cannot be denied, that she has, in the same period, been going on increasing in wealth, in power, and in intelligence. In fact, there are a great many more existing circumstances than there were five-and-twenty years ago, to enable Ireland to receive the boon which she now claims, with advantage to herself; and the danger of withholding that boon, on the other hand, is proportionably increased, compared with what it was five-and-twenty years ago.]

And, what are the dangers of admission? My right honourable friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, has told us, that our ancestors, contemplating a speculative danger, thought it right to provide against it, even for their remotest posterity. Now, Sir, I do beg of the House, to weigh the probabilities of this speculative danger against the near and palpable and positive danger which now exists. I do intreat of them to ask themselves whether, if they relieve themselves from this last and urgent danger, they necessarily, or even probably, bring upon themselves the risk of that distant and speculative one, which is so much dreaded—whether, if so improbable an evil should occur, the remedy against it would not at all times be in our own hands? The Catholics now are supplicants for justice, and for an equal participation of civil rights with their fellow-subjects. It is this position which makes them formidable. Concede to them that participation, and the danger ceases. I believe it would cease altogether; but admitting, for argument's sake, that the constant object of Catholic ambition is the subversion of our Protestant government, I think the most prejudiced Protestant must admit, that it would be a danger of a different description. The Catholic laity and nobility, who now supplicate to be admit-

ted to the benefits of the British constitution, backed by all the moral and political influence which upholds their claims, must then, in order to create any danger, become aggressors against those very institutions, upon which depends the existence of those very benefits, which they are so anxious to share. By what influence, moral or political, would they then be supported? By none. I believe there would be no risk of such an aggression; but, assuming it to be possible—that is, assuming men to be desperately foolish, as well as desperately wicked, I say that the risk would be contemptible—contemptible in proportion as the attempt was wicked and foolish—compared to the dangers to which we are now exposed.

My right honourable friend, the strength as well as the sincerity of whose arguments upon this question have so often called for the applause of all parties in this House, is not one of those who object to every concession to the Catholics. He does not make common cause with those who think that every thing which is now withheld ought for ever to be withheld. On the contrary—and it is the strongest evidence, if any were wanted beyond his own personal character, of his sincerity—he has told us, that, with some doubts as to the Bench, he limits his objections to seats in the two Houses of Parliament, and the Privy Council. With respect to the latter, my right honourable friend appears to have forgotten that it rests with the Crown to bestow such a mark of distinction, and that, moreover, it is scarcely possible for any individual to attain to it but through the channel of Parliament.

But then there may arise a man in Parliament, of such transcendent talents, of such exalted excellence of character, with such a following in this House, as to give him an ascendancy in the councils of Parliament and of the country! It cannot be denied that such an occurrence is barely possible. But, with how many bare possibilities must it be coupled and connected, before the presence of such an individual would lead to danger! He must be a bigot, his mind debased and subdued by the worst doctrines of the Roman church—a hypocrite of the most profound dissimulation, such as would enable him to blind the House, and to escape the keen vigilance of the Press, and the jealous scrutiny of the other free institutions of the country. His ambition must be such as never actuated a statesman in a popular assembly—his love of fame, still more extraordinary than his ambition. He must, in short, possess such a combination of qualities, as have never been united in any individual who has in any times endeavoured to obtain authority through the medium of a popular assembly. Yet, if there be such a man, I would say, let him come into this House. And then, Sir, let his talents, his eloquence,

his genius, be what they may, we have had standards, we still have standards in this House, by which this creature of my right honourable friend's ingenuity may be measured, and modelled. Let him come here, and his ambition will be taught to move in its legitimate sphere. Here, its progress can be watched, its course calculated, its movements foreseen, its orbit ascertained. But, exclude his ambition, banish it from its natural sphere, it becomes an eccentric and blazing comet, disappearing at intervals, but, in its irregular and desultory movements, returning again to spread alarm, and carry desolation in its course.

[I am sorry to trespass so long upon the time and patience of the House, but I cannot conclude without saying a few words more, with regard to the Societies which have been suppressed in Ireland, or without warning honourable gentlemen,—and I must be permitted to repeat that warning again and again—that if they do not at once proceed to do away with these unjust restrictions, and to repress these childish and unfounded prejudices, they will, over and over again, have to deal with assemblies in that kingdom of as formidable a description as the late Catholic Associations.] You may put down one association, but the like evil will arise again in some other shape, directed to the same ends, pregnant with the same dangers, putting forth the same pretensions, exercising the same power over the Catholic population, giving birth to the same angry passions, fostering the same violent factions, which, in their struggles, have so often rendered the laws inefficient, the Government powerless, and the people miserable.

I have only one word to say upon the subject of the two Wings,* as they have been called, to this Bill; which has been rendered the more necessary, by what fell from the honourable member for Durham,† last night. The honourable member stated, that he considered those two measures as having originated with those to whom the House had devolved the task of bringing in the present Bill, and had been the result of meetings and discussions, which they had held for that purpose. Now, Sir, I only think it necessary to state, that neither my right honourable friend,‡ (whose absence on such an occasion as this, and more especially on account of its cause, the House must deeply regret), nor myself were present at any of those meetings or discussions—that we were no parties to the bringing forward those measures; and I believe I may positively state, that the

* The Elective Franchise for Ireland Bill and the Resolution respecting a provision for the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland.

† Mr. Lambton, the present Lord Durham.

‡ Mr. Canning.

notice given by my honourable friend, the member for Staffordshire,* and by the noble lord,† was the first intimation which he had of their intentions. He was no party to their plans, and had no cognizance of them. [For my own part, I believe that both measures were intended to aid and accelerate the great measure of Catholic emancipation. As to the Bill for disfranchising the forty-shilling freeholders of Ireland, I cannot quite say that I altogether approve of its principle. In voting for the other, I intended to give it my sanction only up to this point and to this extent—that as this House holds the public purse, and is bound to provide for the expenses of the public service, so I should hold it to be, to provide for the effectual operation and results of a measure which, by granting Catholic emancipation, will be calculated to produce such incalculable benefits to the community, over which the parties in question may fairly be supposed to exercise so extensive an influence. But when my right honourable friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, talked about the making provision for a regular establishment,—for archbishops, bishops, and an inferior clergy,—as a concomitant to the bill for Roman Catholic Emancipation, I beg to say that I stand pledged to no such provisions whatever. I think, indeed, that it will require much previous inquiry and consideration, before we can proceed to make any provision for the Catholic clergy by law. And I should be unwilling—as far as I can judge now upon a subject so complicated and difficult, and mixed up with many other considerations that will be fully gone into before any definitive plan is acted upon—to place that provision, whatever it may be, beyond the control of Government; in the same manner as was observed towards the Protestant dissenters, and other separatists from the church of England. To the Bill now before the House, I give my cordial support.]

The House divided: For the third reading of the Bill, 278. Against it, 227. Majority, 51.

* Mr. Littleton.

† Lord Francis Leveson Gower.

BANK CHARTER AND PROMISSORY NOTES ACTS.

FEBRUARY 10th, 1828.

THE House having resolved itself into a committee of the whole House, on the Bank Charter and Promissory Notes Acts, the Chancellor of the Exchequer took a comprehensive view of the advantages which would result to the Public in general, as well as to the Bankers themselves, from the calling in of the small notes, and moved, "That all Promissory Notes payable to bearer on demand, issued by licensed Bankers in England, or by the Bank of England, for any sum less than 5*l.*, bearing a date previous to the 5th of February 1828, or which may have been stamped previously to that day, shall and may continue to be issued, re-issued, and circulated, until the 5th day of April 1829, and no longer." The right honourable gentleman stated, that it was also intended to allow an extension of the present limited number of partners in Banking firms. Mr. Baring characterised the proposed measures as being mere milk and water, and by no means adequate to the evils to be subdued. He also maintained, that the Bank was cramped by its connection with the Government, and its means rendered unavailable, to their fair extent. After Lord Folkestone and Captain Maberly had followed on the same side,

Mr. Huskisson said, that although he could not concur with all that had fallen from the honourable captain who spoke last, as to the causes of the recent events, he was bound to acknowledge, that he had made a very clear and luminous statement on the subject. The noble lord opposite, and his honourable friend, the member for Taunton, had, in the course of their addresses to the House, made some observations which would afford him an opportunity of explaining a point which appeared to be much misunderstood. His honourable friend, the member for Taunton, had indulged in some animadversions—harsh and unsupported—on what he was pleased to call the insensibility of the First Lord of the Treasury, and of his right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in respect to the present distresses of the country. He was not sure, indeed, whether his honourable friend had not included the whole of the members of Government in his censure. It was not necessary for him to vindicate his noble friend at the head of the Treasury, from the imputation of a want of feeling, either for the difficulties of the country, or the distresses of individuals. He was sure that his noble friend must be aware

of the extent of suffering, from the daily intercourse which he had with those who were most competent to inform him of the state of affairs in the city.

Both the noble lord and his honourable friend had commented very strongly on a passage in the Correspondence between Government and the Bank of England, without distinctly understanding, as it appeared to him, the way in which it applied. The passage to which he alluded, was that commencing with the words, "the panic in the money-market having subsided," &c. Now, he need not ask his honourable friend, who, he believed, was in London about the middle of December, and was a witness to what was then passing, whether there did not exist at that time, for two or three days, such a state of affairs in the money-market, such a complete suspension of all confidence, as, contradistinguished from commercial distress, rendered it impossible to procure money upon even the most unobjectionable security? He appealed to every gentleman present connected with the city, whether it was not a fact, that, during forty-eight hours, it was impossible to convert into money, to any extent at least, the best securities of the Government? Persons could not sell Exchequer bills—they could not sell Bank stock—they could not sell East-India stock—they could not sell public securities on the funded debt of the country. That difficulty did not arise from any rational idea of the insolvency of the Government, or of the Bank, or of the other great corporate body, but from that panic to which his right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the First Lord of the Treasury alluded in the passage which had been referred to, as having existed, and as being removed. Was the statement not true, then, that the panic—that state of things which he had just described—had been removed? No one now heard of two or three London bankers stopping every morning. It was no longer impossible to convert all public securities into money. The operations of the Royal Exchange had resumed their ordinary course. Did Lord Liverpool suppose that, when the panic in the money-market was over, the commercial transactions of the country would not be affected? No such thing! In the conversations which he had had with Lord Liverpool, his noble friend had stated, that the convulsion in the money-market must inevitably derange the transactions of commerce, and involve them in difficulties.

The honourable member who last addressed the House seemed to be aware of the distinction which existed between the operations of the money-market, and those of commerce. If the difficulties which existed in the money-market a short time since had continued only eight-and-forty hours longer, he sincerely believed that the effect would have been to put a stop to all dealings

between man and man, except by way of barter. It had been very truly observed, that the Bank, by its prompt and efficacious assistance, put an end to the panic, and averted the ruin which threatened all the banking establishments in London, and through them the banking establishments and moneyed men all over the country; and he firmly believed that, in saving others, it had actually saved itself. The conduct of the Bank had been most praiseworthy. He would take upon himself to say, that the Bank directors, throughout their prompt, efficacious, and public-spirited conduct, had the countenance, advice, and particular recommendation of the First Lord of the Treasury and of his right honourable friend to assist them. Therefore he had a right to say, that his colleagues, in their Communication to the Bank, alluded to the state of the money-market only. It should be recollected, that his colleagues were addressing persons with whom they had been in constant communication from the commencement of the panic. They knew the extent of the distress which existed in the commercial interest, but they did not allude to it, because it was not immediately connected with that part of the subject to which they were directing the attention of the Bank.

His honourable friend, the member for Taunton, had inferred from what appeared in the Correspondence, that the Government was ignorant of what was passing in Scotland. Could it for a moment be supposed, that his noble colleague and his right honourable friend were so ignorant of the state of the country, as not to know that the greatest commercial distress at present existed in Scotland, and that the Scotch bankers, by their mode of affording discounts, were aggravating that distress? It was, however, quite consistent with that fact, that the system of Scotch banking afforded greater securities than the English system; and therefore it was desirable to introduce the former into this country.

He did not know whether the noble lord opposite intended to subject the whole of the members of the Government to the charge of insensibility to the distresses of the country; but he could assure the noble lord, that there was no part of his speech in which he so cordially and entirely concurred, as that in which he stated, that a system of currency which produced great and violent fluctuations in the price of commodities, was one which, however it might affect the opulent merchant or the man of landed property, was deeply to be deplored, on account of the manner in which it operated to aggravate the distresses of the labouring classes. That was the opinion which he had uniformly maintained. It would be found recorded in the Report of the Bullion Committee of 1810, and it had been stated by him, on every occasion when he had been called upon to deliver his sentiments on the subject.

There was no part of the system of the Currency at which he looked with greater anxiety, than the manner in which it prejudiced the interests of the labourer, and particularly those employed in agriculture.

His honourable friend, the member for Taunton, had observed, that he had never heard a speech so calculated to create disappointment—so inadequate to the occasion—as that of his right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. His honourable friend had followed up that remark by a dissertation—a very able one certainly, to which he had listened with great attention, and, in some parts, with great satisfaction—on the general system of banking in the abstract. His honourable friend then entered upon a statement of the difficulties under which he supposed the Bank of England to labour, on account of the advances on Exchequer bills; and other advances, more or less of a permanent nature, made by it to Government. As the question was one of fact, it was material that it should be set right. His honourable friend was considered a great authority; and a statement going forth from him was likely to produce a considerable effect. He wished, therefore, that the matter should be fairly stated. His honourable friend had stated the advances made by the Bank on account of the half-pay annuity at eight millions, forgetting that considerable sums were paid by Government to the Bank, twice a year, on account of that transaction; which, if deducted, would reduce the amount advanced by the Bank to 5,400,000*l*. He was not then going to discuss the prudence of that arrangement: he was only desirous that the matter should be correctly understood; because it was a little hard that his honourable friend, who had himself contracted for loans with Government, should endeavour to throw on Government the odium of having imposed on the Bank in the arrangement. The arrangement was a voluntary one on the part of the Bank: it was, in fact, a description of loan. The Bank, perhaps, had not pursued precisely the same course as his honourable friend would have adopted, under similar circumstances. He, perhaps, would have doled out the loan piece by piece; selling it to the public, when he saw an opportunity of doing so to advantage. With that, however, he had nothing to do. The Bank were the best judges of their own interests. He could take upon himself to say, and no Bank director could contradict him, that there was nothing done, on the part of the Government, to prevent the Bank from disposing of the contract in any way they might think proper, at any period. He was sure that his honourable friend would not wish, particularly at the present moment, when he must be so fully aware of the danger of misrepresentation, to state any thing but the fact. He must say, however, that in his statement of the

manner in which the capital of the Bank was locked up by its advances to Government, his honourable friend was not correct. His honourable friend said, that the whole of the capital of the Bank was lent to the Government. If he meant, that the whole of the capital which the Bank possessed at the period of its foundation was lent to Government, as the price paid for their charter, he could not dispute the truth of that proposition; but his honourable friend ought to distinguish between that capital, and that which had been accruing to the Bank, in consequence of their profits, and with which they were at liberty to deal as they pleased. His honourable friend stated, that the Bank were in the habit of issuing seven millions upon Exchequer-bills at one time, and nine millions at another, and that those advances swallowed up all their capital, and left them without any means at their disposal. In the first place, did any one suppose that the seven millions which constituted the charge on the consolidated fund, became all demandable on one and the same day? The money was drawn out in separate portions at different periods. At the same time, the accruing receipts of the new quarter were daily paid into the Bank; so that, after all, the alarming statement made by his honourable friend, respecting deficiency bills (which he was surprised that he should have put forth at a period of such excitement), amounted to nothing more than this—that the Bank was in the habit of paying daily to, and receiving daily from, the Government, in the same way as a private banker would deal with his customer. Instead of the Bank advancing twenty-four millions to Government, as his honourable friend had stated, they advanced only the sum he had mentioned on account of the half pay (which they might get rid of if they thought proper), and about six millions on Exchequer bills; for with respect to the deficiency bills, he considered it no advance at all.

He was not a little surprised at another part of his honourable friend's speech. His honourable friend stated, that at an early period after the conclusion of the war, the market which existed on the Continent for our manufactures afforded a favourable opportunity for obtaining a supply of gold, which would have enabled Government to have got rid of the one and two pound notes. Did his honourable friend recollect the state of distress in which the continent was placed by the operation of the tremendous war, of which it had been the theatre for a quarter of a century? The continent had not then the means of paying for our manufactures. In fact, there was, at the present moment, a much greater export of manufactures than at the period to which his honourable friend had alluded. Talk of the principles of trade!—he was surprised to hear his honourable friend argue, that in order to obtain a supply of bullion, it was necessary that

the goods exported should be paid for directly in metallic currency. The quantity of exports last year was greater than in any previous year in the history of the country. Their total value was greater than in any previous year. What signified it to him, whether those exports went to Cuba or the United States of North America, or the New States of South America. Did not his honourable friend know how bills sometimes travelled about through the world? Why, it had come under his own knowledge, that bills given in payment for goods exported, had travelled from South America to India, and had ultimately been returned to this country in the shape of bullion. To talk, then, of our having been shut out from the continent, and having lost the opportunity of obtaining bullion, shortly after the peace, was a misrepresentation of facts. The acquirement of bullion depended on our exports.

The honourable member who spoke last had imputed to his right honourable friend, that he had not gone into the real cause of the distress of the country. The real cause had been stated by his right honourable friend. It was a spirit of speculation and overtrading. He agreed with the honourable member in thinking, that the immediate cause of those distresses, and the feverish state in which the country had been recently placed, was overtrading; and the anxiety of his Majesty's ministers was, not only to relieve the country at present, but to take such steps as would prevent the recurrence of those distresses—distresses which went to the extent of producing a stagnation and want of confidence in our trade, to a degree unparalleled in the history of this country,—distresses, which rendered unsaleable and inconvertible into money, all the usual articles of trade and commerce.

Let the House but consider for a moment what had been the immediate effect of this overtrading. It produced a rise in prices, so rapid that it had never been equalled. And what was the consequence? Why, a fall as rapid and as unequalled as the rise had been. If he were asked to give documentary proof of the causes which led to those reverses in our commercial transactions, he should beg leave to read an extract or two, pledging himself that they should be much shorter than those with which the honourable member, who had preceded him, had favoured the House. Mercantile and trading men were, of course, aware that there was published, twice a week, in London, an account of the Price Current of the different articles on sale in the city; and to this very useful publication the editor was in the habit of giving, at the end of the year, a summary of the rise and fall of prices, adding his own opinions of the manner in which the markets had been conducted during that period. The paragraph which he was about to read from that paper had reference to the year 1825.

The editor, after some comments on the state of the markets, went on to say, that such was the mania for speculation, which in March and April had taken hold of persons of all classes—not confining itself to speculators, but extending to steady merchants and traders,—that even on the article of nutmegs the price rose from 2s. 6d. to 12s. 6d. per pound, in the space of one month. He added, that the speculation on other spices had the effect of producing a corresponding rise in their prices.

But the mania was not confined to these articles. In cotton, coffee, sugar, and tallow, the rage for speculation was equally great; and merchants, traders, shopkeepers, clerks, apprentices, and persons of all conditions, partook equally of the phrenzy of vying with each other in their endeavours to secure a monopoly in each different article; so that the prices were raised higher than could ever have been expected, and higher certainly, than they could long continue. And this state of things, be it observed, was not included in the number of those wild, insane, and Bedlamite schemes, with which the market had been inundated; but had its rise amongst those who were considered the sober, steady merchants and traders of the metropolis. These speculations attached themselves to every staple commodity of our imports for the purposes of manufacture, as well as to the foreign articles of our consumption—cotton, wool, timber, wine, tobacco. In fact, every article which it was necessary to draw from foreign countries, became the object of this species of speculation.

And when, he would ask, did all this take place? It took place at a period when the exchanges were against this country, and when gold was necessarily going out of it! For he said again—and he was anxious to submit his statement upon this point to any set of practical men—that an unfavourable state of the exchanges had the effect of encouraging an increase of our exports to, while it checked our imports from, foreign countries. Well, then! if any set of practical men saw that, at a period like this, when our coin was itself finding its way out of the country, every corner of Asia and America was ransacked for cotton wool, and other articles of speculation; and if, at such a period, money was so plentiful in the country as to be hawked about, and offered at a depreciated rate of interest, was it not a convincing proof, that there was something wrong in the state of our currency? And if so, he would ask any sober man—certainly, there were not many sober in the city, at the period to which he alluded—but he called upon any sober man to say, to what such a state of things, if unchecked, must come at last?

With respect to the state of the Currency, there had, unfortunately, been much difference of opinion. But the Bank felt called upon to provide for its own safety, by narrowing its issues.

And what was the result? The spirit of speculation was checked; and, as a necessary result, those country banks which had been most rash and immoderate in aiding those speculations, by advances, were ruined. But the evil did not stop here; for the ruin of a few bad and unstable banks involved in difficulties many establishments of a similar nature, which were otherwise placed upon the most stable footing. A panic was spread throughout the country. The country banks, amounting to seven or eight hundred, applied to the Bank of England as their only reservoir; so that she was assailed upon every side. Seven or eight hundred drains were at once opened through her—gold was to flow from her into the country. The Bank of England was, in consequence, placed in a state of the greatest difficulty and embarrassment.

Now, he would ask, whether this was a situation in which the country banks ought to be allowed to stand?—whether it was safe or convenient that they should remain upon such a footing? He maintained that it was not. It was his opinion—an opinion not hastily formed, but the result of long and anxious observation—that a permanent state of cash payments, and a circulation of one and two pound notes, could not co-exist. He would put his argument into the form of a single proposition—If there were, in any country, a paper currency of the same denomination as coin, the paper and the coin could not circulate together: the paper would drive out the coin. Let crown notes be made, and we should never see crown pieces: make half-crown notes, and a half-crown would not remain in circulation: allow one-pound notes to circulate, and we should never see a sovereign. It was very well known, indeed, that in 1821 and 1822, when the Bank of England felt a laudable anxiety to establish a gold circulation, and had actually endeavoured to saturate the country with gold, such was the indifference for the precious metal, that the parcels of gold coin, which they sent down by one mail, were returned by another.

If this, then, were a right and just description, to what inference did it lead? He did not speak it to the disparagement of the country bankers, when he said, that they had endeavoured, and very naturally, to put out as much of their paper as they could. They might have had gold by them to some extent; but if cautious and prudent—and he was sorry to say that some of them had shown themselves not to be so, although he believed that the country banks in general were managed with a good deal of prudence and discretion—but if prudent and cautious, they always placed their chief reliance on the Bank of England. And not only did the seven or eight hundred provincial banks of England thus rely on it, but even the banks of Scotland, and the national bank of Ireland, looked to it as their security.

He would ask, then, any reasonable person, if it was fair or just, that the Bank of England should be expected to provide gold for those various applicants, no matter under what circumstances they should seek for it—no matter whether the exchanges were favourable or unfavourable to this country? So long, indeed, as the national bank had the advantage of having an exclusive trade, perhaps something in the way of a sacrifice might be reasonably expected from it; but after having, in the most disinterested manner, surrendered a part of its monopoly, in which it was greatly interested, the Bank naturally expected to be relieved from a liability which tended greatly to embarrass, if not to injure it. It was, under any circumstances, unnatural to require that the Bank of England should be the means of protecting and securing all the country banks; which, if persevered in, might one day have the effect of involving the establishment in serious difficulties. Why, he asked, should the Bank of England be obliged to insure all the other banks in the country? Why not, on the contrary, oblige each country bank to insure itself, by having in its possession, or at its command, a certain portion of coin of the realm, to answer the demand which might be made upon it, in cases of emergency?

He had already spoken of the difficulties which had arisen from overtrading. The honourable member for Taunton* had said, indeed, that we must look to nothing else for the cause of those difficulties. Now, he could not agree to this. He would look to much more. Last session, when the subject of the corn laws was under discussion, he had stated, that the gold was going abroad; that the foreign exchanges were becoming unfavourable to us; that the Bank of England ought to look to it; and he had adverted to what might be the effects of an unfavourable harvest. The honourable member had spoken of the harvest as a favourable one. He would ask, then, what must be the nature of a system, which, with a favourable harvest, and at a period of profound peace, was capable of producing such pain and distress as had lately been experienced?

The House had gone far in their endeavours to restore a metallic currency to the country; and he would ask, whether they were prepared to hazard the disgrace of stopping short in their career, by continuing the circulation of the one and two-pound notes? He trusted that the measures, brought forward by his right honourable friend, would be felt to be deserving of the support of those gentlemen who were not in the habit of voting with his Majesty's ministers. This was a question of the greatest magnitude, and of vital importance to the country; and his right

* Mr. Baring.

honourable friend was well warranted in saying, that in the event of its being negatived, he should not envy the responsibility of the individual who would have to manage the finances of the country, while the state of the currency was left to the chapter of accidents.

One of the great evils which they were called upon to correct was the excessive issue of paper. This had been productive of the greatest distress. It had been the destruction of confidence between all classes of society. It had caused the ruin of thousands of innocent individuals. It had given rise to fluctuations in our currency, which were sometimes in favour of the debtor, and sometimes of the creditor; but which frequently involved the one and the other in the deepest distress. Nothing but disgrace and danger could attend a deviation from those correct principles of currency, which Parliament had solemnly recognized.

He was surprised to hear his honourable friend, the member for Taunton, assert that if this measure was carried, it would involve the whole of the agricultural interest in distress, equal to that which it had experienced at a former period. If he had not been aware that his honourable friend was in England in the months of November and December last, he should have thought, from what he had said, that he was entirely ignorant of recent events. He would ask the honourable member, whether he had passed a town or a district, in which a bank had not been swept away? He would ask him, whether he had not witnessed the effects produced, not only on the shop-keepers and traders, but on every class of farmers, by such failures? With whom did the farmers transact their business but with the country bankers? And how many gentlemen had been obliged to suspend the collection of their rents, in consequence of the losses sustained by their tenants, in the deposits which they had made in the hands of the country bankers—losses which were felt, not only in cities and towns, but even in villages; where the labourers were frequently paid, not daily or weekly, but monthly, in one-pound notes of the country bankers? What, then, must be the overwhelming misery of those persons who were visited by the sudden privation of the means of supplying their hourly wants and necessities? This distress had overtaken the farmer and labourer, but in a still greater degree the manufacturer and the artisan.

And here he could not but advert to an expression used by the noble lord opposite, that the proposed measure would have the effect of bringing back again the agricultural distress which existed previous to 1822. Need he tell the noble lord, or his honourable friend, that there was a necessary connection between those who consumed and those who supplied agricultural produce? Was it necessary that he should point out the fact, that

a fall in the demand for the labour of manufacturers must necessarily produce a decrease of consumption; and that one must, of necessity, regulate the other? What was it that occasioned the revival of the agricultural interests in 1822? He maintained that it arose principally from the revival of the manufacturing interests and from the employment of thousands, who had, for a considerable time, been deprived of an opportunity of supporting themselves by their labour. The increased means with which they were furnished necessarily brought about an increase of consumption; and looking to the opposite side of this argument, he was convinced, that the manufacturing distress which was now so generally felt, must have the effect of diminishing the demand for the agricultural produce of the country. It was the natural course of things that, in such a fluctuating state of our currency, all classes of society must, in their turn, be affected by it; and, therefore, the sooner we got rid of that fluctuation, and returned to a sound, healthy, and permanent circulating medium, the better would it be for the community at large.

If they wished for a proof of the value of a steady, unchangeable currency, they had it in the example of France. That country had been twice invaded: twice had her capital been taken possession of; and she had been compelled, in 1816 and 1817, to pay large sums to foreign countries for corn. But she had a steady metallic currency; and however such visitations might have affected the great—however the extensive contractor might have been injured or ruined—the great body of the population remained unmolested. The storm which uprooted the forest tree, had passed over without injuring the humble reed; and this was mainly to be attributed to the permanent footing upon which the Currency of the country had been placed.

If the plan of his right honourable friend was carried into execution, he was satisfied it would have the effect of making the country banker as sensitive on the subject of the exchanges, and as watchful of any unfavourable turn which might take place in them, as the Bank of England now was. He would carefully watch the circumstances which were calculated to bring gold into, or send it out of, the country; and this caution being timely impressed upon him, the danger would, in a measure, be passed. There would then be no fear of any agitation or convulsion in the country, as the interest of every banker would compel him to provide himself for any coming emergency: in other words, every country banker would feel an equal interest with the Bank of England, in watching the state of the Currency, and guarding against its fluctuations.

If, then, it was necessary, for the best interests of the country, that the Currency should be established on a sound and solid

foundation, and that the country banks should be prevented from drawing the metallic currency out of the kingdom, by the issue of these small notes, the next question was—whether this was a proper time for carrying the measure into execution? But before he touched upon this, perhaps it would be proper that he should make one preliminary observation respecting the country banks. He was far from being hostile to these banks. On the contrary, he thought they would be of great service to the country, provided they were placed under proper regulations. He wished to save these banks themselves from the consequences of their own proceedings—from the liability of each to be ruined by the failure of the others. But, to effect this, they must be prevented from issuing paper, as low as the highest denomination of the metallic currency of the country. They must not be permitted to issue their one-pound notes—corresponding with the sovereign—the highest denomination of metallic currency. To give them the privilege of making such issues was, in fact, to permit them to assume the powers of the prerogative. Let them continue to issue paper, and to extend and act upon their credit; but let them not issue their small notes, and thereby trench upon the prerogative.

The question then was—Is the present the fit time to provide, by law, for the gradual and progressive withdrawal of these small notes? Some gentlemen had contended, that this was not the fit period. Now he, on the contrary, maintained, that this was the most proper time, when so much of this currency was actually afloat, and the bankers were smarting under the consequences of their over-issues. Was it when a drinker of ardent spirits was intoxicated, that you could persuade him to give over that detestable habit? No! but when he was in his sober senses, and suffering under the effects of his previous intemperance. The issue of these notes had been already greatly curtailed, by the failure of a hundred country banks, and from other causes. The country banks had, at this time, a large stock of gold in their hands, drawn from the bank of England. They had found it necessary, for their own safety, to lay in stores both of gold and Bank of England notes. Now, therefore, was the most convenient time for providing, by law, for the gradual extinction of this small-note circulation. If the House waited until the present difficulties were passed, they would soon find that those notes, which were at present withdrawn, would speedily be re-issued. The bankers had actually got the gold in their coffers. It was in the country; and this was the moment to provide that it should not again be so readily exported.

The House should also bear in mind the difficulties they would have to encounter from these country banks, in any attempts to intermeddle with their notes and profits, in case the issuing of

these small notes were, to any considerable extent, resumed. If they now postponed the commencement of this salutary measure, would any honourable gentleman assure him, that it would ever be begun? A more favourable opportunity for commencing the good work than the present they could not expect. If they allowed it to escape, and these notes were again extensively circulated, it would be said—why did you not resort to this measure when the issues of these notes were so greatly curtailed?—If the adoption of measures for placing the Currency upon a sound and solid foundation were to be resisted by such arguments as he had heard that evening, there was an end of all hopes of ever securing a proper coinage and standard of value.

With respect to the extension of the number of partners in country banks, when these banks were limited to so small a number as six, they were naturally led, by private views of interest, to depart from the just principles of banking. But if a firm consisted of, suppose two hundred partners, and their business was controlled by directors, and they were tied down by rules which would not admit of these ruinous speculations—he did then think it would be a great improvement, if chartered banks were established, with only a limited liability. It would, no doubt, induce many persons of great credit and fortune, to invest their money in shares of such banks. But the Bank of England objected to the extension of this limited liability, and had stipulated, that the banks of Scotland and Ireland should not possess this privilege.

His honourable friend, the member for Taunton, had recommended the giving to England a metallic currency, on a more extensive basis than could be obtained by the recall of the one and two-pound notes. He agreed with his honourable friend, that it would be desirable that the currency should be rested on a firm and secure basis. For himself, he was bound to confess, that he entirely differed from his late friend, Mr. Ricardo, as to the basis upon which the currency of the country ought safely and properly to rest; and he did believe that if that gentleman, ingenious as he was, had been the sole director of the Bank of England, the country would, before this, have witnessed the stoppage of that establishment. He had paid much attention to the subject of currency generally, and had bestowed some labour upon it; and he did think that Mr. Ricardo's view of the question had been a wrong one; and, while he was upon the subject, he might as well at once observe, that he should be glad to pursue, and would pursue, some further enquiry—perhaps before the Board over which he had the honour to preside—into the best mode of improving the suggestion thrown out a few nights since by the honourable member for Taunton; and of introducing, in some

shape or other, silver as a legal tender, so as to give an additional security to the country—as far as human prudence and foresight could give security—against its being ever again placed in the dangerous predicament of even a temporary suspension of cash payments.

He had very little more to address to the House; but upon one point a few words ought to be said in his own justification, and in justification of those with whom he had acted. An honourable member had said, in rather sweeping terms, that for much of the late wild speculation which had been carrying on throughout the country, ministers were chiefly to blame. Now, the House would recollect when it was that the great bulk of these speculations had first commenced. It was in the spring of last year. Standing where he did, to refer to what had been said by Lord Liverpool in another place, would be contrary to order; but he had taken the trouble to refresh his memory as to the precise terms of what he had said himself. In February last—in the very commencement of those speculations—he had used this particular expression in speaking of them—“that the lottery was a safe adventure, compared with the mass of those in which persons were then engaging.” Again, in the month of March, speaking of the speculations, he had distinctly declared it to be his opinion, that those who engaged in them would find themselves disappointed. Unfortunately, those to whom this advice had been addressed had disregarded all warning. They had, too many of them, rushed, in contempt of all caution, on to their own undoing and destruction. But, although it would be irregular in him to refer to the precise terms in which Lord Liverpool had spoken upon the subject of those unfortunate speculations, yet he might say, that the opinions delivered by that noble lord had neither been less unfavourable to them, nor less strongly expressed, than his own; and, so far from having adopted any measures calculated to foster or assist dealings of that hazardous character, he did most distinctly affirm, that Government had done every thing in its power to discourage speculations, and remove the infatuation.

The debate was adjourned to the following day; when Mr. Baring moved, by way of amendment, “That it is the opinion of this House, that, in the present disturbed state of public and private credit, it is not expedient to enter upon the consideration of the Banking System of the country.” Upon which, the House divided: For the Amendment, 39. Against it, 222.

EXPOSITION OF
THE EFFECTS OF THE FREE TRADE SYSTEM
ON THE SILK MANUFACTURE.

FEBRUARY 24th, 1826.

A few days after the meeting of Parliament, Mr. Baring, on presenting a Petition from Taunton against the introduction of French Silks, expressed a hope, that the subject would undergo a discussion at an early period, seeing that hundreds of thousands of individuals anticipated ruin and starvation from the late regulations. He was anxious to see whether or no the House would support ministers in their desperate resolution. Mr. Huskisson said, that whenever the subject should be brought forward in a regular and formal manner, he should be prepared to meet the objections to the regulations which had been recently adopted, with regard to the Silk Trade. Accordingly, this day, Mr. Ellice moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and examine the statements, contained in the various petitions from persons engaged in the Silk Manufacture, and to report their opinion and observations thereon to the House." In seconding the motion, Mr. John Williams declared, that "he could not allow the existence of half a million of persons to be used as an experiment in proving the correctness of an abstract theory. If the authors of this measure were so convinced of their principle, that they were prepared to make that sacrifice in carrying it into execution, the strength of their resolution would, under present circumstances, only prove the quality of their hearts. A perfect metaphysician, as Mr. Burke had observed, exceeded the devil in point of malignity, and contempt for the welfare of mankind. He must look upon their perseverance, in this case at least, as a proof of overweening attention to the principle which they might have adopted, be the application, in experiment or result, either good or bad. Let the right honourable gentleman opposite, and his colleagues, take one admonition from him;—the responsibility must, in any event, remain with them. From that responsibility no gentleman or set of gentlemen in that House could relieve them. The House might divide it with them and lessen it; but the chief burthen must remain on their shoulders. Such was their fate, and to it they were bound by the constitution of the country, and by their acceptance of place; and answer they must to the country for the result, however great or little the discretion which had directed them. If the House professed any community of feeling with the public, among whom were so many actual sufferers from the existing evil, ministers would be alarmed, and driven from their purpose by the vote of that night."

Mr. HUSKISSON rose, and spoke, in substance, as follows :—

Sir;—Although the honourable member for Coventry, who introduced the present motion, may be supposed to be under the influence of suggestions and views, which have been furnished to him by his constituents, and from other sources out of doors, I am, nevertheless, ready to admit that the circumstance ought not to detract from the weight, which is fairly due to the honourable member's statements and arguments, in support of the motion which he has submitted to the House.

But, Sir, however true this may be, as far as respects the honourable member for Coventry, the same observation applies not, in the remotest degree, to the honourable and learned gentleman who has seconded the motion; and who, acting, I must suppose, under the influence of a connection, certainly not political, but the more binding, perhaps, as having been more recently formed, has thought proper to take a wider range, and to indulge in a higher tone of declamation:—or it may be, that he looks forward to the expectation of becoming the colleague of the honourable mover; and, by his speech of this evening, proposes to declare himself a joint suitor with the honourable mover, for the future favours of the good people of Coventry. Whatever may be the motives of the honourable and learned gentleman, I confess that I have listened with the utmost astonishment to the speech which he has just delivered.

Sir, in the course of that speech, the honourable and learned gentleman repeatedly told us, that he was not authorized to make certain statements—that he was not at liberty to admit this, and to admit that. This, I presume, is a mode of expression, in which gentlemen of the legal profession are wont to indulge, to mark that they keep themselves within the strict limits of their briefs, and that the doctrines which they advocate are those prescribed to them by their instructions. However customary and proper such language may be in the courts of law, it certainly sounds new and striking in the mouth of a member of this House.

With regard to the general tone of the honourable and learned gentleman's speech—the vehemence of his declamation, his unqualified censure, and his attempts at sarcasm, I can, with perfect sincerity, assure the House, and the honourable and learned gentleman, that I entertain no sentiment bordering upon anger, nor any other feeling, save one, in which I am sure I carry with me the sympathy and concurrence of all those who entertain sound and enlightened views upon questions of this nature—a feeling of surprise and regret, at finding that honourable and learned gentleman, now for the first time, launching forth his denunciations and invectives against principles and measures, which have

received the support of men the most intelligent and best informed, on both sides of this House, and throughout Europe.

Having said thus much, I leave the honourable and learned gentleman to the full enjoyment to be derived from the new lights that have so suddenly broken in upon him. I leave to him, and to his honourable friends around him, to settle, among themselves, the taunts, the sneers, and the sarcasms, which he has heaped upon their heads, as the friends of those principles which are involved in the present discussion—principles which it has been their boast that they were the first to recommend, and of which they have uniformly been the most eager advocates in this House.

In whatever quarter the statements and arguments of the honourable member for Coventry may have originated, they are entitled to the serious and attentive consideration of the House; more especially if derived from individuals now suffering distress from want of employment, and who may have been led to believe, that that want of employment has been caused by measures which have been adopted by this House. This circumstance adds to the difficulty in which I am placed, in rising to address the House on the present occasion. In opposing the proposed inquiry, I feel that I may be represented as insensible or indifferent to the sufferings of those on whose behalf it is called for.

Sir, the honourable and learned member for Lincoln has, indeed, given countenance to this unjust imputation. He has not only chosen to assert, that I am mistaken in my views—he has not scrupled to insinuate, that I am without feeling for the distress now prevailing amongst the manufacturing classes. [Mr. Williams here denied that he had asserted any thing of the kind.] What, then, Sir, did the honourable and learned gentleman mean by his quotation? To whom did he mean to apply the description of an “insensible and hard-hearted metaphysician, exceeding the devil in point of malignity?”—I appeal to the judgment of the House, whether the language made use of by the honourable and learned gentleman, with reference to me, was not such as to point to the inference, that I am that metaphysician lost to every sentiment of humanity, and indifferent to every feeling, beyond the successful enforcement of some favourite theory, at whatever cost of pain and suffering to particular bodies of my fellow-creatures? When the honourable and learned gentleman allows himself to talk of “hard-hearted metaphysicians, exceeding the devil in point of malignity,” it is for him to reconcile such language with the general tenor of his sentiments on other occasions; to explain, as he best may, to those around him, whether they are included in that insinuation;—and it is for me to meet that insinuation (as far as it was levelled at me) with those feelings of utter scorn with which I now repel it.

Still, Sir, it sits heavily on my mind, that any individual, or any body of individuals, should in any quarter be impressed with the notion, that I, or any of my right honourable colleagues, could be capable of that which has been imputed to us; and it is but perfectly natural that I should feel anxious to show, that my own conduct, and that of my right honourable friends, has not been such as, in some quarters, it has been represented to be.

The honourable member for Coventry, and the honourable and learned member for Lincoln, have, by some strange perversion, argued the whole case, as if I, and those who act with me, were hastily and prematurely pressing on some new, and till this evening, unheard-of measure—as if we were attempting to enforce that measure by all the influence of Government: instead of which we have proposed nothing, and are lying upon our oars, quietly waiting for the going into effect of an Act of Parliament, passed more than eighteen months ago, with the unanimous concurrence of this House; an act which is now the law of the land; and of the enactments of which all the parties concerned were as fully apprized on the day when it first passed this House, as they can be at this moment.

In the view which I take of the speech of the honourable member for Coventry, of which I do not complain, and of the speech of the honourable and learned member for Lincoln, of which I do complain, the greater part of their arguments go to impugn those principles of commercial policy, which, under the sanction of Parliament, have now prevailed in this country for the last two or three years;—a policy, which has for its object gradually to unfetter the commerce of the country, by the removal of those oppressive prohibitions and inconvenient restrictions, which had previously existed; and to give every facility and encouragement, consistent with vested interests, to the extension of the skill, the capital, and the industry of the people of England.

This, then, being the real drift of the argument especially brought forward by the honourable and learned gentleman, it is, with reference to a much greater question, that I find myself called upon to consider the present motion. The point at issue is, not whether we shall grant the Committee, but whether we shall re-establish the prohibitory system? If we re-establish it in one instance, we shall very soon be called upon to do so in many others. If we once tread back our steps, we shall not be able, in this retrograde motion, to stop at that point from which we first set out: we must go further, and, ere long, we should have in this country a system of commerce, far more restrictive than that which was in force before the late changes. Anxious as I am to persevere in our present course, I say that, if we once depart from it, we must at least be consistent in our new career;

and that, to be consistent, we must impose restrictions and prohibitions, far beyond those which have been lately removed.

The present question, therefore, is not simply the motion before the House—but neither more nor less than, whether a restrictive or an enlarged system of commercial policy be the best for this country?

In order to come to a sound decision upon so important a subject, it behooves the House to look back a little to the course of events, and to bear in mind some of the occurrences which have materially contributed to those relaxations in the restrictive system, of which it is now the fashion to complain.

With this view, I must ask the permission of the House to call its attention to a Petition, presented to the House in the month of May, 1820, a period which, like the present, was one of great difficulty and public distress. The Petition is somewhat long, but I assure the House, that those honourable members who may favour me with their attention, will be well rewarded by hearing sound principles laid down, in the clearest language, not by philosophers and unbending theorists—not by visionaries and hard-hearted metaphysicians, with the feelings of demons in their breasts—but by merchants and traders; men of the greatest practical experience in all that relates to commerce. This Petition, Sir, is a document of no ordinary interest. The House will see how decidedly the Petitioners maintain the principles upon which his Majesty's Government have acted; and, when I have done reading it, I am sure they will admit, that those principles are therein expounded in words far more apt and forcible than any which I can command. The Petition, as I have already said, is not the exposition of any speculative doctrine. It conveys to the House the deliberate judgment of the Merchants and Traders of the City of London; the result of their daily observation of the evils inflicted upon the country, by the unnecessary restrictions imposed upon their industry and pursuits. The Petition states,—

“That Foreign commerce is eminently conducive to the wealth and prosperity of the country, by enabling it to import the commodities for the production of which the soil, climate, capital, and industry of other countries are best calculated, and to export in payment those articles for which its own situation is better adapted.

“That freedom from restraint is calculated to give the utmost extension to foreign trade, and the best direction to the capital and industry of the country.

“That the maxim of buying in the cheapest market, and selling in the dearest, which regulates every merchant in his individual dealings, is strictly applicable, as the best rule for the trade of the whole nation.

“That a policy, founded on these principles, would render the commerce

of the world an interchange of mutual advantages, and diffuse an increase of wealth and enjoyments among the inhabitants of each state.

"That, unfortunately, a policy, the very reverse of this, has been, and is, more or less adopted and acted upon by the Government of this and of every other country; each trying to exclude the productions of other countries, with the specious and well-meant design of encouraging its own productions; thus inflicting on the bulk of its subjects, who are consumers, the necessity of submitting to privations in the quantity or quality of commodities; and thus rendering, what ought to be the source of mutual benefits, and of harmony among states, a constantly recurring occasion of jealousy and hostility.

"That the prevailing prejudices in favour of the protective or restrictive system may be traced to the erroneous supposition, that every importation of foreign commodities occasions a diminution or discouragement of our own productions to the same extent; whereas, it may be clearly shown, that although the particular description of production which could not stand against unrestrained foreign competition would be discouraged; yet, as no importation could be continued for any length of time without a corresponding exportation, direct or indirect, there would be an encouragement for the purpose of that exportation of some other production, to which our situation might be better suited; thus affording at least an equal, and probably a greater, and certainly a more beneficial employment to our own capital and labour."

I will not trouble the House with reading the whole of this valuable document.—[Cries of "Read! read!"] I will then, Sir, read the whole, for it is a most valuable document; and, indeed, so it was thought at the time, for it is one of a few, if not the only one, which is given at length in the published reports of our proceedings.

"That of the numerous protective and prohibitory duties of our commercial code, it may be proved, that while all operate as a very heavy tax on the community at large, very few are of any ultimate benefit to the classes in whose favour they were originally instituted, and none to the extent of the loss occasioned by them to other classes.

"That among the other evils of the restrictive or protective system, not the least is, that the artificial protection of one branch of industry, or source of protection against foreign competition, is set up as a ground of claim by other branches for similar protection; so that, if the reasoning upon which these restrictive or prohibitory regulations are founded were followed consistently, it would not stop short of excluding us from all foreign commerce whatsoever.

"And, the same strain of argument, which, with corresponding prohibitions and protective duties, should exclude us from foreign trade, might be brought forward to justify the re-enactment of restrictions upon the interchange of

productions (unconnected with public revenue) among the kingdoms composing the union, or among the counties of the same kingdom.

"That an investigation of the effects of the restrictive system at this time is peculiarly called for, as it may, in the opinion of the petitioners, lead to a strong presumption, that the distress which now so generally prevails is considerably aggravated by that system; and that some relief may be obtained by the earliest practicable removal of such of the restraints, as may be shown to be most injurious to the capital and industry of the community, and to be attended with no compensating benefit to the public revenue.

"That a declaration against the anti-commercial principles of our restrictive system is of the more importance at the present juncture, inasmuch as, in several instances of recent occurrence, the merchants and manufacturers in foreign states have assailed their respective Governments with applications for further protective or prohibitory duties and regulations, urging the example and authority of this country, against which they are almost exclusively directed, as a sanction for the policy of such measures: and certainly, if the reasoning upon which our restrictions have been defended is worth any thing, it will apply in behalf of the regulations of foreign states against us; they insist upon our superiority in capital and machinery, as we do upon their comparative exemption from taxation, and with equal foundation.

"That nothing would more tend to counteract the commercial hostility of foreign states, than the adoption of a more enlightened and more conciliatory policy on the part of this country.

"That although, as a matter of mere diplomacy, it may sometimes answer to hold out the removal of particular prohibitions on high duties, as depending upon corresponding concessions by other states in our favour, it does not follow, that we should maintain our restrictions, in cases where the desired concessions on their part cannot be obtained; our restrictions would not be the less prejudicial to our own capital and industry, because other governments persisted in pursuing impolitic regulations.

"That, upon the whole, the most liberal would prove to be the most politic course on such occasions.

"That, independent of the direct benefit to be derived by this country on every occasion of such concession or relaxation, a great incidental object would be gained by the recognition of a sound principle or standard, to which all subsequent arrangements might be referred; and by the salutary influence which a promulgation of such just views, by the legislature and by the nation at large, could not fail to have on the policy of other states.

"That in thus declaring, as the petitioners do, their conviction of the impolicy and injustice of the restrictive system, and in desiring every practical relaxation of it, they have in view only such parts of it as are not connected, or are only subordinately so, with the public revenue; as long as the necessity for the present amount of revenue subsists, the petitioners cannot expect so important a branch of it as the Customs to be given up, nor to be materially diminished, unless some substitute less objectionable be suggested: but

it is against every restrictive regulation of trade not essential to the revenue, against all duties merely protective from foreign competition, and against the excess of such duties as are partly for the purpose of revenue, and partly for that of protection, that the prayer of the present Petition is respectfully submitted to the wisdom of Parliament: the petitioners therefore humbly pray, that the House will be pleased to take the subject into consideration, and to adopt such measures as may be calculated to give greater freedom to foreign commerce, and thereby to increase the resources of the State."

It will be clear to all who have been at the trouble to attend to the very able document which I have just read, that it embraces all the great principles of commercial policy, upon which Parliament has since legislated.

Why do I lay so much stress upon this Petition? For the purpose of showing; first, that if the Government have pursued this course, we have done so, not on the recommendations of visionaries and theorists, but of practical men of business; secondly, that the merchants of the City of London—the great mart of the commerce and wealth of the country—felt convinced, in 1820, that the distress of that period was greatly aggravated by the narrow and short-sighted system of restrictions and prohibitions which then prevailed; and that, in their judgment, the alleviation, if not the cure of that distress, was to be sought for in the removal of those restrictions and prohibitions.

And, because we have followed up, cautiously and circumspectly, the recommendations of the mercantile community, are we to be told by men who know nothing of commerce, that we are unfeeling projectors and metaphysicians, insensible to the wants and the miseries of our fellow-creatures? If this be a just charge against us, what are we to think of the parties who could sign, or of the member who could present, such a petition as this? This morning I took the trouble to look at the names of the merchants who signed it; and the first signature I read is that of one of the most distinguished of that class in the City of London; a gentleman who was many years ago Governor of the Bank of England, who is now one of the Directors of that establishment, and who was, for a long time, a valuable member of this House; a gentleman who, in the best sense of the word, is a practical man, and one whose conduct in private life would protect him (if any man can be protected by his conduct) from the suspicion of being a "wild and unfeeling theorist"—a "hard-hearted metaphysician"—"alike indifferent to the wants and the miseries of his fellow-creatures"—I mean Mr. Samuel Thornton.

besides his name, the list contains the names of others, who, him, have been Governors of the Bank of England; of all who are now in the Direction of that great establishment;

and of many who hold the highest rank in the commercial world.

Let it not, however, be supposed, that I offer this Petition to the House, in the way of an apology for myself and my right honourable colleagues—in the way of extenuation of any thing which we may have done, to excite the wrath of the honourable and learned member for Lincoln. Sir, I think now, as I have always thought, that our measures require no apology. I believe now, as I have always believed, that they are calculated to promote the best interests of the people. I say now, as I have always said, that those who, either by their speeches in Parliament, or the exertions of their talents out of it, have contributed to bring the people of England to look with an eye of favour on the principles recommended in this Petition, have done themselves the greatest honour, and the country an essential benefit.

If, however, I refrain from troubling the House with apologies, where I feel that they are not required, neither do I wish to claim for His Majesty's Government, any participation in the merit of these measures, beyond what really belongs to us. By a reference to many other petitions and proceedings of a like nature with those to which I have already adverted, I could show that, in all these matters, the first impulse was not given by the Government. We claim for ourselves no such credit. The changes hitherto made have been the result of public opinion, sanctioned by the concurrence of practical men, and confirmed by the proceedings and inquiries of the two Houses of Parliament. We did not create that opinion: we did not anticipate it: we did not even act upon it, until it was clearly and distinctly manifested. And, in what we have done, we have not exceeded the sober limits, prescribed by the authority of those, who by the habits and pursuits of their lives, were most competent to form a sound judgment. But, when that judgment was pronounced and recorded, it was our duty to act upon it. From those who fill responsible situations, the country has a right to expect, not that they should be slow of conviction to important truths in matters of political economy; but that they should be cautious in deliberating, before they attempt to give them a practical application. The goad, which is used to give increased impetus to the machine, is an instrument more properly placed in other hands: the care of Government should rather be to regulate the drag, so as not to check the advance, but to maintain a safe and steady progress towards improvement.

Has this been the principle of our policy on the subject now under consideration? Before I sit down, I think I shall prove, Sir, that the system upon which his Majesty's Government have acted, has uniformly been guided by that principle. Need I re-

mind the House, how frequently, and with what asperity, we have been charged, from the opposite Benches, with reluctance and tardiness in carrying into execution those principles of an enlarged and enlightened policy, in matters of commerce, upon which all parties were said to be agreed. Year after year have we been urged, by the force of public opinion out of doors, and by the earnest remonstrances of honourable members within, to adopt the very measures, against which a senseless clamour is now attempted to be excited.

Who were the first, and the most earnest, in suggesting these measures—ay, and in wishing to push them to extremes—but some of those very persons whom we now find arrayed against us, and against those principles which they formerly supported? By whom was the petition which I have just read to the House presented? By whom was the prayer of it advocated?

After great note of preparation—after a formal notice of what was about to come—this Petition, Sir, was brought down, on the 8th of May 1820, by the honourable member for Taunton,* whom I now see in his place. He it was, Sir, who introduced it to the attention of the House, in a long, but able and elaborate speech; too long to be read by me now, as I have read the Petition; although, by so doing, I should add a most luminous commentary, in support of the doctrines of that Petition, and should best show, by what force of argument and weight of authority, the honourable member then contended for those measures, which the House is now called upon to condemn, and in which condemnation he himself appears disposed to concur.

After mentioning the Petition, and the great respectability of the gentlemen by whom it was signed; and after regretting, that “there was in the then circumstances of public embarrassment much, to which no remedy could be applied, at least, no Parliamentary remedy,” the honourable gentleman went on to say, that the first *desideratum* was such security and tranquillity in the country, as would enable the possessor of capital to employ it without apprehension.”

The House will recollect, that the period at which this Petition was laid upon our table, was one of great public distress; and, in that respect, it but too much resembled the present time. Now, however, though the country is again visited with pecuniary pressure, and though the labouring classes (many of them) are suffering great privations from the want of employment, I feel confident that we shall not witness the same danger to property, or the same disposition to violence, which at that time prevailed in the manufacturing districts. I feel confident, that the unfor-

* Mr. Baring

fortunate individuals who, in 1820, allowed themselves to be misled by unprincipled agitators, will recollect how much their sufferings were increased by listening to pernicious counsels—counsels, which may prolong and aggravate, but which can, in no case, abridge or relieve their privations—and that they will not, a second time, lend a willing ear to those who would lead them on to their destruction. I trust they will so conduct themselves under their present difficulties, as to conciliate the regard and sympathy of every other class, and to excite in the bosoms of those from whom alone they can expect assistance, no other feelings than those of kindness and benevolence.

Sir, after “security and tranquillity,” the honourable member for Taunton proceeded to say, that “the second desideratum was, as great a Freedom of Trade as was compatible with other and important considerations.” In the opinion of the honourable member, at that time, a free trade was the very essence of commercial prosperity; and, therefore, he pressed us to adopt, all at once, the system which we have since gradually introduced.

The honourable member then proceeded—as he has since done, upon several occasions, and done, indeed, this session—to tax my right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (who then filled the situation which I now hold), and the other members of his Majesty’s Government, with apathy, and a total indifference to the distressed state of the manufacturing districts. “So far were they,” said the honourable member, “from being sensible of the necessity of some exertion, that they went on, from year to year, trusting that the next year would be spontaneously productive of some favourable change, and, apparently, with very indistinct notions of what the real condition of the country was. Whenever a question arose between two classes of the community, Government, without seeming to have any opinion of their own, stood by, until they ascertained which party could give them the most effectual support. If the House looked back to an earlier period of those which were still our own times, they would behold a different picture; they would find Mr. Pitt engaged in framing a Commercial Treaty; and amidst difficulties of every description, boldly taking whatever steps appeared to him to be best calculated to advance our commercial prosperity. He wished that he could see a little of the same spirit in the present day; but, instead of that, his Majesty’s Ministers were balancing one party against another, and trying how they could keep their places from year to year; neglecting, in the meanwhile, all those great commercial and national questions, to which their most lively attention ought to be directed.”

The honourable member for Taunton then went on to say—and I perfectly agree with him—that, “the first doctrine which

the Petitioners wished to combat, was that fallacious one which had, of late years, arisen, that this country ought to subsist on its own produce; that it was wise on the part of every country, to raise within itself the produce requisite for its consumption."—"It was really absurd to contend," continued the honourable member, "that if a country, by selling any article of manufacture, could purchase the produce which it might require, at one half the expense at which that produce could be raised, it should nevertheless be precluded from doing so."

This is unquestionably sound doctrine, and I readily admit it. But, how is it to be reconciled with the doctrine, which is now maintained by great authorities out of doors, as that which ought to be the rule of our commercial policy? According to these authorities, to which we have now to add that of the honourable and learned seconder of the present motion, Prohibition is the only effectual protection to trade: duties must be unavailing for this purpose, because the influence of soil and climate, the price of labour, the rate of taxation, and other circumstances, are constantly varying in different countries, and consequently, the scale of protection would require to be varied from month to month. But, what is the legitimate inference to be drawn from this exclusive system? Can it be other than this—that all interchange of their respective commodities, between different countries of the world, is a source of evil, to the one or the other!—that each country must shut itself up within itself, making the most of its own resources, refusing all commerce with any other country, barbarously content to suffer wants which this commerce might easily supply, and to waste its own superfluous productions at home; because, to exchange them for the superfluities of that other country, instead of being an exclusive advantage to either party, would afford an equivalent benefit to both. This is the short theory of Prohibitions, which these sage declaimers against all theory, are so anxious to recommend to the practical merchants of this country.

But, if this system be wise and just in itself; if, for the reasons alleged in its support, it be necessary for the protection of British industry, let us see to what it leads. Can this country command labour, on the same terms as Ireland? Is the scale of taxation the same? Are the poor rates the same, in the two countries? Is there any country in Europe which, more than Ireland, differs from Great Britain in these and many other particulars, affecting their commercial relations? Does it not follow, that, if we admit the system of prohibitions, now recommended to us by the honourable and learned member for Lincoln, we must prohibit all commercial intercourse with Ireland—we must revive those laws which forbade the manufactures, and repelled the productions of

her soil—we must sacrifice the mutual benefits, which both parts of the empire now derive from the unrestricted freedom of intercourse—we must again revert to the prejudices of our ancestors?

And, for what?—because, from prejudices certainly less pardonable, if not from motives less sincere, than those of our ancestors, a senseless clamour has recently been raised, against the present system of our commercial policy. I have no desire to disturb the partizans of the opposite system, in the enjoyment of their favourite theory. All I ask of them is, a similar forbearance towards us. Let each system be fully and fairly tried. For the sake of Freedom of Trade and Industry, and for the sake of England, let England be the field of trial for our system. For the sake of Prohibition and Monopoly, let the system of our adversaries also be fairly tried;—only let the trial be made upon some other country.

But, can Prohibition ever be tried under circumstances of greater favour, than it now experiences in Spain? In that flourishing country, prohibition has been carried to the very extreme. There, restriction has been added to restriction,—there, all the fruits of that beautiful system are to be seen, not yet, perhaps, in full maturity, but sufficiently mature, to enable every one to judge of their qualities. Spain is the best sample of the prohibitory system; the most perfect model of fallen greatness and of internal misery, of which modern civilization affords an example—an example to be traced, not only in the annihilation of her commerce and maritime power, but, in her scanty revenue, in her bankrupt resources, in the wretchedness of her population, and in her utter insignificance among the great powers of the world. The commercial policy of Spain is simply this—to admit nothing from other countries—except what the smuggler brings in. And the commercial wisdom of the honourable and learned seconder of the present motion is equal to that of Spain.

I must now beg of the House to indulge me for a little, while I endeavour to go through the detail of the specific measures recommended, in the Speech of the honourable member for Taunton, on presenting the London Petition. It will be perceived, how false and unfounded are all those clamours, which have been heaped upon me and my right honourable colleagues, for having unnecessarily made those alterations in our system of Commercial Policy, which, if I am to believe certain gentlemen, have plunged this country into misery and ruin.

The honourable member for Taunton, who is so great a practical authority,—the greatest, perhaps, this country affords—did not content himself in his speech with stating general principles. He referred to details; and, as I have just observed, he proposed measures of relief of a specific and particular nature. These

propositions the House, I hope, will permit me to go over, one by one, in order to show that his Majesty's Government have not been wanting in attention to the suggestions of the Merchants of the City of London, nor backward in adopting their remedies, and recommending them to the consideration of the House.

The *first* measure pointed out, upon that occasion, and recommended in the warmest terms, to the attention of his Majesty's Ministers, for the relief of the country, was "an alteration of the duty on the importation of Wool." "What can be so absurd," said the honourable member, "as a tax on the raw materials of our manufactures?" Accordingly, he urged the abolition of the duty on the importation of Foreign Wool, dyeing drugs, and such other articles as are used in the great manufactures of this country. What, at that time, was our answer to this proposition? Why, this—"We have no objection to take off the duty on the importation of Foreign wool, provided you will consent to allow the free exportation of British wool."—"No," said the woollen manufacturers, "take off the duty on Foreign wool, if you please; but keep in force the law which prohibits the exportation of British wool from this country." To this proposal we would not agree. We could not, upon any principle of justice, open our markets to an untaxed article of foreign growth, unless the manufacturer would concede his monopoly over the like article of our own growth. After years and years of struggle and conflict, we at last succeeded in convincing our opponents, that the duty on Foreign wool might be taken off, and the prohibition to export British wool be repealed, without endangering their interests.

And what has been the result? Where is the ruin that was so confidently predicted? I own I am more and more distrustful of the predictions of these practical authorities. Instead of our manufactures being ruined—instead of the fulfilment of the assurances, that all the British wool would be exported, to the utter destruction of our manufacturers, and that from their destruction the Foreign wool would no longer be wanted in this country—what has been the real effect of this measure? Why, that since the removal of the restrictions on the export, we have sent abroad the amazing quantity of 100,000 lbs. weight of British wool; while, of Foreign wool, we have imported no less a quantity than 40,000,000 lbs. weight. This, Sir, is not speculation. It is practice and result against speculation. We removed the restrictive and prohibitory duties, and the consequences were, that we imported an excess of the foreign raw material, while we exported, comparatively, none of native growth—because, we had a better market for it at home. Good or bad, therefore, the first measure recommended to the attention of his Majesty's Ministers—the honourable member has been carried into complete effect.

The *second* measure proposed for our adoption, by the honourable member for Taunton, was a general revision of the Revenue Laws, with a view to their simplification. The honourable member stated—and he stated truly—that those laws were so numerous, so complicated, and so contradictory, that mercantile men could not understand them—that they were at once a great impediment to trade, and a source of vexation and oppression to all who were engaged in it—that no man, however innocent his intention, could escape their penalties; that, therefore, it was the bounden duty of his Majesty's Government to simplify and consolidate them.

The task was one of great magnitude and difficulty; but we did not shrink from it. My right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, devoted a great deal of time and attention to the subject: but, I am free to admit, that we never could have succeeded in our undertaking, without the assistance of an official gentleman, in the service of the Customs, a gentleman* of the most unwearied diligence, and who is entitled, for his persevering exertions, and the benefit he has conferred on the commercial world, to the lasting gratitude of the country. Of the difficulties of the undertaking, the House will be enabled to judge, when I state, that there were no fewer than five hundred statutes, relative to the Customs alone, to wade through; independently of the numerous enactments concerning Smuggling, Warehousing, the Plantations, &c. In the performance of this duty, we had innumerable difficulties to encounter, and battles without end to fight. And now, Sir, in one little volume,† which I hold in my hand, are comprised all the Laws at present in existence, on the subject of the management and the revenue of the Customs, of Navigation, of Smuggling, of Warehousing, and of our Colonial Trade, compressed in so clear and yet so comprehensive a manner, that no man can possibly mistake the meaning or the application of them. I do not say this to boast of the successful result of our labours. It was the duty of Government to do what it has done. I only adduce it to show, that this, the second recommendation of the honourable member, as the organ of the Commercial world, has not been disregarded.

Then comes the *third* recommendation of the honourable member for Taunton; namely, that we should do away with Prohibitions altogether; and substitute, in all cases, protecting for prohibitory duties. I will beg leave to read a short extract from what I consider a very accurate report of this part of the hon-

* J. D. Hume, Esq., Comptroller of His Majesty's Customs in the Port of London.

† Laws of the Customs, by J. D. Hume, Esq.

ourable member's speech. "Another desirable step," said he, "would be to do away totally prohibitions, as much as possible." To be sure, Sir, it may be difficult to reconcile "totally," and "as much as possible;" but, I have no doubt the honourable member's meaning was to express his thorough detestation of the prohibitory principle. "Where," he continues, "protection for particular manufactures is considered to be necessary, it ought to be in the form of duty, and not in that of prohibition. Prohibitions had, no doubt, seriously injured the Revenue, by the encouragement which they gave to smuggling. The Customs had fallen off a million and a half, in the course of the last year. He was sure that a good deal of that defalcation might be ascribed to Prohibitions."

I intreat the House to attend to what follows in the Speech of the honourable member:—"Nothing could be more absurd than to suppose, that any prohibition would prevent the introduction of the articles which were in demand. The fact was, that, at an advance of twenty or twenty-five per cent., all *light* prohibited articles might be had at our doors. He would not say which sex was most to blame, but such was the fact." Now, here we have the opinion of a practical man, who had come to this conclusion, after collecting the best evidence upon the subject, during his repeated visits to Paris. Indeed, I cannot help thinking, that the honourable member had Silk, and nothing but Silk, in his view, at the time when he made these allusions. The honourable member has long been a professor of those doctrines, which he now reprobates me for upholding, as much as he then censured the Government for not more readily adopting. Even in the year 1817—also a period of distress—I find the honourable member declaring to the House, that, "in the article of Silk, smuggling was carried on to a very great extent; a proof of which was to be found in the fact, that although silks were in much greater use now than formerly, yet that the British manufacturer was ruined." So that it appears, Sir, that in the year 1817, the Silk manufacture, which, according to the doctrines of the present day, can only flourish under a system of prohibition, was, in that year, in a state of ruin, owing to prohibition.

The stagnation and embarrassment of 1816 and 1817 were followed by a state of unusual commercial activity. In like manner, the depression of 1822 and 1823 terminated in the extraordinary spirit of speculation, which marked the autumn of 1824, and the spring and summer of 1825. It is not irrelevant to the present discussion to compare these two periods, each commencing with commercial distress, and each ending in over-trading—each marked, in its first stage, by a great contraction of paper circulation, and the accumulation of a vast amount of

gold in the coffers of the Bank, and, in its second, by a great expansion of our circulating credit, and by the re-exportation of most of the gold which the Bank had previously accumulated. This comparison, whilst it connects itself with the question now under our immediate consideration, is calculated to throw some light on the equally important question of the Currency, which, at this moment, occupies so much of the attention of Parliament and of the country.

At the beginning of the year 1817, "the Bank," as we are informed by the Report of the Committee of 1819, "possessed a larger amount of cash and bullion in their coffers, than they had been in the possession of, at any former period since their establishment." With this accumulation, they gave notice of a partial resumption of cash payments, engaging to pay in gold all notes under 5*l*. From the beginning of 1817 till the month of July in that year, the whole demand for gold coin, under this notice, did not exceed 38,000*l*; but, in consequence of a great augmentation of Bank paper in August 1817 (exceeding, by upwards of three millions, the amount of the corresponding month in the preceding year), and of a like augmentation of country paper, the foreign exchanges were turned against this country; and, from that moment, the gold was withdrawn from the Bank with much greater rapidity. In the course of the following eighteen months, many millions of coin were thus put into circulation, without any corresponding diminution in the amount of Bank notes;—or rather, to speak more accurately, these millions, as soon as they were taken from the Bank, were sent to France, and other parts of the Continent, till the treasure of the Bank was very much reduced at the beginning of 1819; and then the amount of their notes was again contracted. This contraction was followed by a great depression of commerce, and of prices, in the subsequent years. During this depression, the Government were frequently called upon, as they are now called upon, to give relief, by an issue of commercial Exchequer Bills; but our first object, then, was permanently to restore—as our first object, now, is effectually to secure—a system of cash payments; the success of which might have been endangered by this mode of relief. So much for the first period, as far as relates to our Currency.

In the first stage of the second period—1822, 1823, and a part of 1824—the Bank again accumulated an amount of gold, greater even than what it possessed at the beginning of 1817. Between September 1824 and November 1825, that gold was again taken out of the Bank, under all the like circumstances of the foreign Exchanges being against this country, and with the like results as had occurred in 1818. Again, notwithstanding the issue of so many millions of coin, the amount of Bank notes and of country

paper was increased: again, these millions so issued were, for the greatest part, exported; and again, in the autumn of 1825, the Bank was driven to take precautions, by contracting its circulation, in order to protect its remaining treasure. What has since occurred is known and felt by all.

So much for the Currency; now for the Trade.

In 1816 and 1817, during the first absorption of treasure by the Bank, the amount of Silk imported was, upon the average of the two years, 1,150,807 lbs.;—in 1818, during the first flight of our coin to the Continent, that importation was raised to 2,101,618 lbs., being an increase of 81 per cent.—Of Sheep's Wool, the average importation of the first two years was 11,416,853 lbs.:—in the year 1818 alone the quantity was 26,405,486 lbs., being an increase of 130 per cent.—Of Cotton Wool, the average of the two first years was 423,580 bales:—the amount in 1818 was 660,580 bales, being an increase of 57 per cent.

Let us now compare the import of the same articles in the years 1823 and 1824, with the import of 1825. It will turn out as follows:—Silk, average import of 1823 and 1824, 2,780,600 lbs.:—import of 1825, 4,231,673 lbs., being an increase at the rate of 50 per cent. Sheep's Wool, average import of 1823 and 1824, 19,225,306 lbs.:—import of 1825, 38,705,682 lbs., being an increase at the rate of 100 per cent. Cotton Wool, average import of 1823 and 1824, 167,120,065 lbs.:—import of 1825, 222,457,616 lbs., being an increase at the rate of 33 per cent.

I will not go more at length into this subject. It would lead me too far away from other topics, growing more immediately out of this debate, to which I have still to advert; but I have said enough to point out, to those who take an interest in these matters, the intimate relation that exists between our Currency and our Trade; to show in what manner the expansion of our paper circulation, combined with an unfavourable foreign Exchange, leads to overtrading, till overtrading again forces a contraction of the currency: thus producing those alternations of extravagant excitement and of fearful depression, which this country has so often experienced of late years; alternations, of which the consequences are at once so dangerous to men of capital, so distressing to the labourers who depend for employment on that capital, and so subversive of those principles of security to property, on which the prosperity of every commercial state must ultimately rest.

The immediate inference which I draw from this comparison is, that the present stagnation in the Silk Trade is more produced by the late alternation, than by any effect of the Law which will come into operation next July.

To return, Sir, to the Speech of the honourable member for Taunton. The *fourth* point to which he called the attention of

Government, was, the state of the Navigation Laws. The change which the honourable member recommended would, in fact, have amounted to the total repeal of those Laws. He thought, "that no restriction ought to be held on foreign ships importing into this country, whether the produce was of their own, or any other country." Accustomed to look on these laws as the prop of our maritime power, and to watch with a jealous eye any encroachment upon them, we could not consent to this sweeping principle of innovation. On the other hand, we professed ourselves ready to inquire, how far some of their regulations, inconvenient for trade, might be dispensed with, without prejudice to the higher political objects, for which those Laws were originally enacted. This inquiry was gone into with great care, by a Committee, over the labours of which, my right honourable friend, the Master of the Mint, presided; and the result has been that, by his zeal and diligence, several measures have been introduced to the House, which have led to a relaxation in those Laws, highly beneficial to the commerce of the country, and in no way injurious to our strength as a maritime power. But the principle of those Laws is still retained. In this instance, certainly, we have not been able to go all the lengths recommended by the practical men; but, be it recollected, that the charge, against which I am now upon my defence, is that we are theorists.

The *fifth* point which was strongly recommended by the honourable member for Taunton, was the removal of the Transit Duties on German Linens, and some other articles of foreign produce. At the very time that the honourable member was pressing for this removal, he must have been aware, that his Majesty's ministers were sensible of the impolicy of these restrictions, and that they were desirous, not only to get rid of them, but also to revise the whole system of Bounties and Drawbacks. But he could not be ignorant of the complication of interests, and the difficulty of detail, which we had to encounter, in every stage of this undertaking. He could not be ignorant of the prejudices, by which this system was upheld. For the abatement of those prejudices, we thought it more safe and more expedient, to trust to the influence of time and reason, than, at all hazards, to encounter them at once by an act of power. This was our theory in 1820; and, I am now happy to add, that, by adhering to it, we have been completely successful. The Transit Duties have been all removed; and the system of Bounties and Drawbacks has undergone an entire revision, and been remodelled on an improved plan.

To come to the *sixth* recommendation of the honourable member for Taunton. He told us, that "it was of importance that we should alter our Commercial Regulations with respect to France.

It was desirable," added he, "that restrictive regulations between the trade of England and France should be removed; but, to do so, we must begin at home. It would be unfair to attempt a negotiation for a commercial intercourse, while we kept our ports shut against them. Let it be considered, that it was not by a restrictive system, that this country had grown to such a pitch of greatness; but on the contrary, that such a system was a bar to that greatness. It was necessary also to remove an impression which our system of commerce had made abroad. We were looked up to as the first commercial nation in the world; and it was, therefore, believed, that we had adopted our restrictive or protecting system, from a conviction of its beneficial effects on our commerce. This impression it was our interest, as well as our duty, to remove, by altering our Commercial Regulations with foreign powers."

This advice of the honourable member for Taunton, his Majesty's Government have also attended to. What have we done in this case? We have "begun at home." We have set an example to the nations of the Continent. We have put an end to the restrictive system affecting France, as far as we could put an end to it. And, we have invited France to follow in our track, by doing away with the obstacles existing on her part to a greater freedom of trade. France has taken a first step towards placing the intercourse between the two countries upon a footing of greater facility. This is a practical approximation, on her part, to the principle of a more enlarged system of commerce; a principle, equally recognized by the most enlightened statesmen, and the most leading merchants, of that country; a principle which cannot fail to make its way in France, as it has made its way in this country, by discussion and inquiry, and which, in proportion as it gains ground, will confer advantages upon France, and, by her and our example, furnish a salutary lesson to the rest of the world.

As I have adverted to this subject, I will beg leave to say one word, as to the Convention of Navigation recently concluded between the two countries; upon which a misconception appears to have gone abroad. I allude to the Decree of the French Government against the introduction of the produce of Asia, Africa, and America, through this country, into France, for home consumption. The Regulation of this Decree has been mistakenly considered, as the effect of a stipulation under the Convention. This I beg leave to deny. The Decree is an act of the French government, quite independent of the Convention. It might, and probably would, have been passed, had no such Convention been made between the two countries. A similar law was proposed to the Chambers last year, and then only postponed. It is a

Regulation of which we have no right to complain, and against which we have no right to stipulate; because, the like restriction exists in this country. That for which we had a right to stipulate, and for which we have stipulated, is, that if, in relaxation of this Decree, any of the productions of Asia, Africa, or America, are admitted into France for home consumption, from this country, they shall be equally admitted, and upon the same duties, in British as in French vessels.

I do not deny that, beyond what is provided for by this Convention, much might be done to improve the commercial relations of this country and France; but, the basis is laid down, and the contracting parties have expressly reserved to themselves "the power of making, by mutual consent, such relaxations in the strict execution of the article, as they may think useful to the respective interests of the two countries, on the principle of mutual concessions, affording each to the other reciprocal or equivalent advantages." The development and further application of this principle must be left to time, and to an improved state of public opinion in France. But, I confidently appeal to the House, and to the honourable member, to say, whether the best course for doing away with prejudices, and unfavourable impressions on the Continent, would be for us to retrace our steps; to re-enact the old prohibitions and restriction; and to exclude foreign merchandize and foreign shipping, as we had formerly done.

Seventhly, and lastly, the honourable member for Taunton recommended to his Majesty's Government, "an extension of our trade with British India." In answer to this suggestion it is only necessary for me to say, that our attention has been incessantly directed towards that desirable object. We have left no steps untried, to prevail on the East-India Company to consent to an enlargement of the Private Trade. To a certain point we have succeeded, though not to the extent of our wishes. If all that the honourable member sought for has not been done, the fault is not ours; we have no means of compelling the company to comply with the wishes of the merchants. The vested rights of that corporation have been conferred upon them by Parliament; and, inconvenient or not, we are bound to respect those rights, till the expiration of that period for which they have been granted.

These are the principal improvements which were urged on the Government of the country, in the year 1820, by the honourable member for Taunton; speaking—be it always remembered—in the name, and on the behalf, of the Merchants of London. To all of these suggestions, I say, his Majesty's Ministers have attended. My right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who then filled the situation which I now hold, replied to the Speech of the honourable member, on that occasion. He

repelled the accusation of the honourable member, that the Government were insensible to the sufferings of the people. He avowed his desire to proceed in the course that was recommended; but he, at the same time, represented the difficulties by which his endeavours had, till then, been opposed. Did the honourable member acknowledge himself satisfied with the assurance and explanation of my right honourable friend? By no means, Sir.

So eager was the honourable member for Taunton for the immediate enforcement of these important changes, that he concluded his reply to my right honourable friend, in the following terms: "as to the Petition itself, the principles which it contained had met with so unanimous a support, that he wondered whence that opposition could come, by which the right honourable the President of the Board of Trade seemed to be deterred from attempting any reform of our Commercial System; and he could not help expressing a hope, that, for the future, that right honourable gentleman would not listen entirely to the suggestions of others, but, in treating the subject, would rely on his own excellent understanding."

With this admonition, the debate closed. The recommendations of the honourable member—the great authorities from which they originated—convinced the Government, that the time was come, when they might go forward with measures, to which they had long before avowed a friendly disposition. The consequence was, a determination, on their part, to institute an inquiry before a Committee of this House, in order to ascertain, how far, and by what course of proceeding, the steps recommended, and any others founded upon the same principles, could be acted upon, for the general improvement of the Commerce of the Country.

In the other House of Parliament, a Committee was sitting, whose labours were directed to the same object. This Committee had been appointed upon the motion of a noble Marquis;* who had, at all times, taken the liveliest interest, in whatever relates to the Trade and Commerce of the country; and whose principles, in these matters, unlike to the *grasshopper* on the Royal Exchange, do not veer about, with every change of wind, or with every fluctuation in the speculations of those who transact business in that Exchange.

One of the subjects which particularly engaged the attention of the noble Marquis, and of the Committee over which he presided, was, the state of the Silk Trade. They heard evidence; they called for papers; and they examined witnesses, from every quarter. What was the result of their investigation? Why, Sir, state in their Report, that, "it appears to the Committee,

* The Marquis of Lansdowne.

that there are no bounds to Smuggling, under the prohibitive system; and that, in the opinion of the Committee, protecting duties might, advantageously, be substituted for prohibitive ones."

Such was the view taken by the Committee of the House of Lords, in 1821. I will not detain the House, by going at length into the course of inquiry, by which they arrived at this conclusion. But, some attempt has been made this night to undervalue the Evidence of two merchants from the United States, who were examined before the Committee; and examined, be it recollected, upon oath. These two merchants came to Europe, for the purpose of purchasing Silks. They first visited France; and then they came to England. They could be actuated by no other interest, than that of procuring Silks on the cheapest terms.

And what was their evidence? On being asked, as to the relative cost of the silks of France and the silks of England, one of them said, that "he had bought goods in France and in England; and that the difference, when the quality was equal, was from twenty to twenty-five per cent.;" and the other said, that "the difference did not exceed twenty per cent.:" but, both of them stated, that, in the article of Silk hosiery, price and quality considered, they greatly preferred the English manufacture to that of France.

The Report containing this evidence, recommended an alteration of the laws relative to the Silk Trade, by the removal of the duty on the raw material, and of the prohibition on raw silks. Honourable members, however, are aware, that the House of Lords could not, from the nature of the proposed change, initiate a measure, to carry into effect the object of this Report.

Nothing further took place till the year 1823; when the honourable member for the city of London,* came down to this House with a Petition from the Master Manufacturers of Spital-Fields, praying for a repeal of what is generally called "the Spital-Fields' Act." This, as the House well knows, was a law for regulating the mode of working in that district; and for enabling the magistrates to fix the rate of wages to be given for each description of work. In short, a most unfit law to remain upon the Statute Book; but the professed object of which was, to protect the Men against the exactions of their Masters. The only possible excuse for having ever passed such a law is that, when it was passed, the Masters had a monopoly of the Silk manufacture in this country.

I will tell the House why I state this. A deputation of the Weavers of Spital-Fields waited upon me, and my right honourable friend, the other day. They are a sincere, well-meaning,

* Mr. Thomas Wilson.

and, certainly, a well-behaved body of men. After hearing their representations, I was satisfied, that if I had put it to them, to make their choice between the revival of the Spital-Fields' Act, or of the prohibitory system—if I had said to them, "You cannot have both a Prohibition and the Spital-Fields' Act, but you may have either the one or the other—take your choice!"—they would have instantly said, "Give us the Spital-Fields' Act, and let the prohibition go to the winds." So much for practical feeling; which is now urged in opposition to what is called theory!

And here I must beg leave shortly to refer to the doctrine laid down in the Petition presented in 1823, by the honourable member for the City of London, to which I have just alluded. The Petitioners state, "that with our unlimited supply of Silk from our territories in India, we might be independent of the rest of the world; that with our great command of capital, and the unrivalled skill of our artisans, the manufacturers did not fear the competition of any foreigners: and that, with a Free Trade, Silk would become, like Cotton, one of the staple manufactures of the country."

I do not mean to accuse these Petitioners of making this statement, in order to entrap the public, and to induce the Parliament to take measures, which they knew would involve their own manufacture in distress: but, I have a right to refer to their Petition, as well as to the more general Petition of the Merchants of London, to show, that the measures which his Majesty's Ministers have taken, are neither the offspring of theory, nor measures which they carried in opposition to the prevailing opinion of the country, or of the Trade. They brought forward these measures, because they were convinced that they were founded in sound policy; but not till they were satisfied, that they would meet with the concurrence and support of those who had a more immediate interest in their result. So far was Government from any precipitation in carrying them into effect, that it was not till the year 1824 that they determined to propose the repeal of the duty on the raw material, and to permit the importation of the foreign manufactured Silk, subject to a protecting duty. They were aware that, without taking the duty off the raw material, they could not attempt this improvement; but, as soon as my right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was enabled, by the flourishing state of the finances, to reduce taxation, he did not hesitate to remit this duty, as the necessary preliminary to the removal of the prohibition.

From that moment, we lost the support of the honourable member for Taunton, to whom I have so often alluded; and his was only heard in opposition to measures, which he had been recommending for our adoption.

My right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, having, on the 23d of February, 1824, stated generally to the House, what it was our intention to do; it fell to my lot, on the 8th of March, to open the measure more in detail. Then it was that I heard, for the first time, of the serious opposition which the proposed measure would receive from the honourable member for Taunton. Then it was, that, seconded by the honourable member for Coventry, who opened the debate of this evening, he declared that, by the end of the two years, which I proposed to allow before the prohibition should finally cease, the Silk trade would be destroyed.

This delay I now consider to have been the greatest error that was then committed, and the origin of our present difficulty; as far as this trade is concerned. "Those," said the honourable member for Taunton, "who propose this new plan, are completely ruining the Silk manufacture of England. The moment this plan is promulgated, the great object of all who have capitals embarked in the manufacture will be, to disentangle those capitals; and those who have no capital, except their labour, will be left to struggle for themselves, and probably to perish, for want of employment."

Such, in 1824, were the gloomy forebodings of the honourable member for Taunton. Experience has made me rather obdurate to all such prophecies; for so many are daily made by individuals, whose fears are excited, or who, when they suppose their particular interests to be at stake, attempt to excite fear in others, that I must have abandoned every measure which I have brought forward for improving our Commercial Policy, had I allowed myself to be acted upon by such forebodings.

Last year, for instance, I received representations from the Iron trade—day after day, and month after month: but, I could not share in their alarms. I must state this, however, with one exception. There exists in this country one considerable establishment, in which iron is smelted by charcoal in great perfection, but at a heavy expense. This iron is held in equal estimation with the best from Sweden; but there was reason to apprehend, that it could not, under the reduced duty, maintain itself in competition with the latter. The establishment in question belongs to a most respectable and scientific gentleman, well known to many members of this House,—Dr. Ainslie. Having heard his statement, I told him that, although I could not alter a general measure to meet one particular case, I would endeavour to devise some other mode of relief, if he should be overwhelmed by the competition.

And what does the House think has been the result? Sir, within the last fortnight, that respectable individual has sent me

word, through an honourable member of this House, not only that his fears have not been realized, but that my most sanguine hopes had been confirmed—that his trade, in fact, had in no degree suffered by those very measures which he apprehended would have been fatal to it; and that it was, upon the whole, in a very flourishing state.

Let us now see how far the predictions of the honourable member for Taunton, and the honourable member for Coventry, have been realized. These predictions were that the Silk Trade would be annihilated in the course of the two years allowed to the manufacturers to prepare for the change.

The bill passed this House in the spring of 1824; and during the rest of that year, the Silk Trade went on flourishing and increasing in the face of this threatened annihilation. In the spring of 1825, there prevailed a degree of excitement—a spirit of speculation—an extension of demand in this manufacture—to a greater degree than ever had been witnessed before, in almost any branch of trade. It was in 1825, that so many new factories were erected; so many new mills set at work; so many new looms occupied. The old mills were not sufficient: many new ones were raised; the erection of each of which, I am assured, did not cost less than from 10,000*l.* to 15,000*l.*: and several of these new mills have not even yet been roofed in.

Thus, at the very time when, to satisfy the prediction of the honourable member for Taunton, this trade should have been in a state of rapid decline, the manufacturers were building to an excess, that had never been equalled in the periods of their greatest prosperity.

The honourable and learned member for Lincoln has alluded to the present condition of the town of Macclesfield. I know what misfortunes and bankruptcies have occurred there, and I feel the deepest and most undissembled sorrow for the sufferings of that population. I am aware of their distressed state at this moment. But I cannot help thinking, that the honourable and learned member, in stating their situation, should also have stated some of the circumstances which have aggravated, if not created, their present difficulties; for certain it is, that the spirit of speculation has, in that town, been carried to the greatest extravagance. According to the last census, in 1821, the whole population of Macclesfield, amounted to 17,746 souls. Now, I will suppose that, between that year and the year 1825, it increased to 20,000. What then, in that year, was the demand for additional labour, in the Silk manufacture alone, of that town? I have seen, and many other gentlemen have no doubt seen, in a Macclesfield newspaper, of the 19th of February, 1825, the following Advertisement:—"To Overseers, Guardians of the Poor,

and Families desirous of settling in Macclesfield. Wanted immediately, from four to five thousand persons,"—[Loud cries of hear, hear !]—The House may well express their surprise ; but I beseech their attention to the description of persons required by this advertisement—" from seven to twenty years of age"—so that the Silk manufacturers were content to receive children of the tender age of only seven years—" to be employed in the throwing and manufacturing of silk. The great increase of the trade having caused a great scarcity of Workmen, it is suggested, that this is a most favourable opportunity for persons with large families, and Overseers who wish to put out children"—[children of *seven* years of age !]—" as apprentices, to ensure them a comfortable livelihood. Application to be made, if by letter post paid, to the printer of this paper."

Humanity is not the least remarkable part of this precious document ; and the House will not fail to observe, how admirably the cruelty of confining children of *seven* years of age to labour in a Silk mill, for twelve or fifteen hours out of the four-and-twenty, is tempered, by the inducement to parents to provide for their families for life. What sort of provision that has been, the present wretched state of these helpless infants will best evince. And here I cannot help observing, that, at the very time such an invitation was sent forth to overseers and parents, by the owners of Silk mills, this House was very properly occupied in passing a bill to prevent the Employment of Children under *nine* years of age in cotton factories.

Very soon after this Advertisement, and before the Mills were finished, in which these children were to be immured, there appeared, I have been assured, another Advertisement, nearly in the same extravagant style :—" Wanted to be built immediately, *one thousand* houses !"—doubtless, to contain the five thousand new inhabitants.

Yet, all this took place in the year 1825 ; just one year, according to the honourable member for Taunton, before the Silk Trade was to expire for ever. I ask, then, what weight can be given to the predictions of those, who, in the face of these striking facts, continue to assert, that the Silk Trade of this country will be annihilated, before the end of the next twelve months ? Can any man wonder, after such an enormous extent of speculation—after such inhuman efforts to induce so many destitute children to flock into the manufactories—after such an influx of population—can any man, I say, wonder—all branches of this trade being now in a stagnant state—at most of these newcomers being out of work at Macclesfield—or at the fact stated by the honourable and learned member for Lincoln—his hair almost standing on end

with horror—"that eleven orders for the removal of as many paupers, had been made out in one week?"

Under ordinary circumstances, it could scarcely have been expected, that the Silk manufacture alone could have formed an exception to the general re-action which has followed over-trading and speculation, in every other branch of commerce; but, under the circumstances of peculiar excitement, which I have now stated, it would, indeed, have been matter of surprise, had it escaped its full share of the common pressure.

Sir, I feel that, upon this occasion, a heavy burden is imposed upon me. I feel that I have not only to defend myself from the attack of the honourable member for Lincoln, but to say something in behalf of my right honourable colleagues;—something in vindication of the House itself, for the course which they have pursued, in the adoption of the system of Commercial Policy which we recommended.

As the whole of that system has been so vigorously attacked, I shall, I trust, be excused, if I touch, very briefly, upon the proceedings of the last session of Parliament,—when, in furtherance of that system, and with the cordial concurrence of this House, I brought forward measures of a more general nature than the Silk Bill of the preceding session; inasmuch as they went to effect an important, and more extensive, change in the Colonial, as well as in the Commercial Policy of the country. The Colonial part of the subject had not, I admit, been much pressed upon his Majesty's Government, either by representations in this House, or in discussion out of doors. But there are occasions in which it is the duty of a vigilant Government, instead of waiting for such pressure, to watch the signs of the times, and to accommodate their policy to those changes in the world, under the continued operation of which a blind adherence to our former system would no longer be either safe or expedient. Upon this principle, I shall be ready to vindicate the alterations, great as they are, in the policy of our Colonial Commerce, whenever those alterations may be called in question; but as, hitherto, they have not been attacked in this House, and as they received the special approbation of the honourable member for Taunton, I shall now say no more upon that part of the subject.

With respect to the alterations in our general Commercial system, however extensive in their application, what were the objects which they embraced? They went to the removal of useless and inconvenient restrictions, to the doing away of prohibitions, and to the lowering of duties so excessive, as to be in prohibitory on the productions of other countries—restrictions, prohibitions, and duties, which, without benefit, nay, highly grievous to ourselves, have produced all the evil effects, and

given rise, in other parts of the world, to the retaliatory efforts of foreign Governments, to put down the commerce of this country. These were some of the bad consequences justly attributed to our exclusive system, by the honourable member for Taunton and the merchants of London, in the speech and petition to which I have so often referred.

And here I cannot but express my astonishment, that gentlemen (I am now speaking of persons out of doors)—who must be better informed—whose sincerity I cannot doubt—but whose judgment, in this respect, seems to be most unaccountably perverted, impute all the prevailing distress, as well as the derangement in the foreign exchanges, which preceded, and, in a great degree, produced that distress, to this lowering of excessive duties, and removal of unnecessary prohibitions.

I have called for the production of a paper, which has not yet been printed, but which will, I hope, in the course of twenty-four hours, be in the hands of every honourable member—for the purpose of showing, what have been, during the last year, the actual imports of most of the principal articles, the duty on which has been most materially reduced. From this document, it will be manifest, that, although there has been some increase of import in most of those articles, in none has it been carried to any great extent. In manufactured goods,—Cottons, Woollens, Linens, &c., the increased import of the whole does not exceed a few thousand pounds. And yet, in opposition to this decisive evidence, there are those, I understand, who had dealings for millions in foreign Loans, who, to facilitate the payments of those Loans, and other financial operations of foreign Governments, have sent million after million of our gold coin, drawn from the Bank of England, to the Bank of Paris, and who, in the face of such gigantic operations, the benefit of which to this country (whatever it may be to themselves) it is difficult to conceive—have been pleased to attribute the unfavourable state of the foreign Exchanges during the last summer and autumn, to the commercial measures adopted by Parliament in the preceding session.

I am happy to say, that where the duties have been lowered upon articles of consumption, the result has hitherto fully borne me out in all my anticipations. In the six months which immediately followed the reduction of the duty on Coffee, the consumption of that article has nearly doubled, without occasioning any decrease in the consumption of Tea. In Wine, the duty upon which, we were told, ought not to have been reduced, without some reciprocity to the productions of this country, the consumption has also increased in an equal degree. And thus it will appear, that the same amount of revenue has been attained by

the Government from diminished burthens; thereby leaving the greater means of comfort and enjoyment to the people.

I come now to the real jist of the Silk question; and which—I say it with all due deference to the honourable mover and seconder of the present motion—has not been, in the slightest degree, touched upon by either of them.

It is admitted on all hands, that Silk is an article which can be easily smuggled; and that it is now smuggled, to a very considerable extent, in spite of all the preventive measures that have, from time to time, been adopted. Now, the object of the British manufacturer is, as much as possible, to shut out the competition of his foreign rival. If smuggling could be prevented, I would concede to him, that prohibition would be most effectual to this object; but, if it cannot, what is the advantage of prohibition, over a protecting duty of 30 per cent.? I say, of 30 per cent., because I never yet conversed with a single merchant or manufacturer, who did not admit, that if a higher protecting duty were imposed, the supply of foreign Silk goods would be thrown into the hands of the smuggler.

The question, then, looking at it practically, is this:—In what degree is Prohibition better, as against smuggling, than a well-regulated duty?—by which I mean, a duty sufficient to protect the British manufacturer, without being so high as to afford a premium to the smuggler.

In the first place, it cannot be denied, that the feelings of mankind are more likely to restrain them from committing a fraud, than from violating a Custom-House prohibition. I am sure it will be conceded to me, that many honourable persons, who would not, for any temptation, be parties to a contrivance to evade a tax, and thereby to rob the public revenue, would feel very little scruple, in wearing an article that is absolutely prohibited, and the introduction of which is not in opposition to any moral duty.

So far, then, the argument, in support of the assertion, that a prohibitory law is the best check upon smuggling, makes directly the other way, and is in favour of protecting duties.

But the great, indeed the only, argument in favour of Prohibition, in preference to a protecting duty, is this—that after the forbidden goods have been landed in this country, and when they are in the possession of individuals, even for their own use or consumption, you may follow them into private dwellings, nay, into the very pockets of the wearers, and seize them upon their persons, in the King's name, at the bare suggestion of any common informer.

To what does this power of seizing and examining all who may be suspected of possessing prohibited articles amount? Sir,

It amounts to this—that if any man—no matter what may be his rank, be he the humblest peasant, or the highest peer in the realm—be suspected of wearing, or possessing, a Silk handkerchief of foreign manufacture, he is liable to have it taken from his neck or his pocket; and to have his house ransacked, from the garret to the cellar, in quest of contraband articles. If, without such a subsidiary regulation as this—a regulation which encourages the worst passions, engenders the most appalling perjury and crime, and which opens so wide a door either to fraud and collusion, or to intimidation and personal violence—prohibition cannot be sustained; then, Sir, I say, in preference to such a system, let us, in God's name, have a well-regulated duty.

And here I hope I may be permitted to digress for one moment, to ask, how a great constitutional lawyer—a staunch advocate for the popular character of our constitution—a zealous stickler for the inalienable rights of the people—a watchful guardian of the sanctity of an Englishman's private abode;—how he could so entirely discipline and subdue his warm and boasted feelings for the Liberty of the Subject, as to pour forth the declamatory harangue, which we have heard this night from the learned member for Lincoln, in favour of this system of prohibition?

But, even with the aid of this power of search and seizure, is prohibition an effectual remedy against Smuggling? I have lately taken some pains to ascertain the quantity of smuggled Silks that has been seized, inland, throughout the kingdom, during the last ten years: and I find, that the whole does not exceed 5,000*l.* a year. I have endeavoured, on the other hand, to get an account of the quantity of Silk goods actually smuggled into this country. Any estimate of this quantity must be very vague; but, I have been given to understand, that the value of such goods as are regularly entered at the Custom-Houses of France, for exportation to this country, is from 100,000*l.* to 150,000*l.* a year: and this, of course, is exclusive of the far greater supply which is poured in, through all the channels of smuggling, without being subjected to any entry. In fact, to such an extent is this illicit trade carried, that there is scarcely a haberdasher's shop, in the smallest village of the kingdom, in which prohibited Silks are not sold; and that in the face of day, and to a very considerable extent.

The honourable member for Coventry has mentioned the Silk goods from India, as those against which any thing but prohibition would prove an unavailing protection. Now, in my opinion, it is scarcely possible to conceive a stronger case, than those very silks furnish, against the honourable member's own argument. I believe it is universally known, that a large quantity of Bandana handkerchiefs are sold, every year, for exportation, by

the East India Company. But, does any gentleman suppose, that these Bandanas are sent to the continent, for the purpose of remaining there? No such thing! They are sold, at the Company's Sales, to the number of 800,000 or a million of handkerchiefs each year, at the rate of about four shillings each. They are immediately shipped off for Hamburgh, Antwerp, Rotterdam, Ostend, or Guernsey—and from thence, they nearly all, illicitly, find their way back to this country.

Mark, then, the effect of this beautiful system—this system, so lauded by the learned member for Lincoln. These Bandanas, which had previously been sold, for exportation, at *four shillings*, are finally distributed, in retail, to the people of England, at the rate of about *eight shillings* each; and the result of their prohibition is to levy upon the consumer a tax, and to give to those who live by the evasion of your law a bounty of *four shillings* upon each handkerchief sold in this country.

That nearly all the Bandanas sold for exportation are re-imported and used in this country, is a fact not denied, even by those who are now most clamorous for prohibition. In a printed Letter from a manufacturer of Macclesfield to the Marquis of Lansdowne, I find the following anecdote:—"It is the custom, in the parterres of the theatres of France, to secure the place, by tying a pocket handkerchief on the seat. I had the curiosity at the Théâtre François, to notice the appearance of them; and, out of twenty-five, immediately around me, there was not one Silk handkerchief." I should have little doubt, if a similar custom prevailed in the pit of our theatre, that this accurate observer would find most of the seats decorated with handkerchiefs of prohibited Silk. Nay, Sir, if strangers were, at this moment, ordered to withdraw from the gallery; and every member were called upon (of course in secret committee) to produce his handkerchief, with the understanding, that those who had not prohibited handkerchiefs in their pockets were obliged to inform against those who had—I am inclined to believe, that the informers would be in a small majority. Upon every information laid under this prohibitory law, the chances are, that the informer and the constable have Bandanas round their necks, and that the magistrate, who hears the charge, has one in his pocket!

Upon the motion of this evening, then, we have to make our choice between a moderate protecting duty, which can be collected, and is likely to be available; and the going back to the system of Prohibition, which I have shown to be productive of such mischievous consequences.

But, since the repeal of the old law, a further difficulty has been introduced in respect to prohibition. Two years ago, when a piece was seized as foreign, the British manufacturer could, upon

inspecting it, at once say, "I know, and can prove, that this is not the manufacture of this kingdom." If asked, "what is your proof?" he would reply, "the superior quality and workmanship of the article: it is quite impossible, that any thing equal to it should have been manufactured in England: it wants that stamp of slovenliness and indifference to improvement, which is the sure characteristic of all silk goods made at home." This is a very natural answer for Monopoly to make; but it comes with a bad grace from a British manufacturer.

But, it may be asked, if excellence of fabric was, at that time, the proof that the article was not British, why is it not so still? I shall give the best answer to this question, by stating what has recently occurred.

Soon after the alteration of our Law, an extensive French manufacturer removed from Lyons to this country. He brought with him his looms and his patterns. Under his management and superintendence, two Establishments were formed, one in Spital-Fields, the other at Manchester. At both of these places he set weavers to work; fully satisfied that a duty of 30 per cent. would afford him sufficient protection. His improved methods—with sorrow I state it—excited the jealousy, and drew down upon him the persecution, of the English manufacturers. They charged this industrious foreigner, boldly, and rashly, and—as in the end it was proved—most unjustly, with carrying on his trade here, merely as a cloak to cover the smuggling of foreign manufactured goods. In their mortification at his success, they even went the length of charging my honourable friend, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the whole Board of Customs, with being cognizant of the fact, and parties to this nefarious scheme for ruining the Silk Trade of England. This accusation was not merely insinuated in whispers: it was contained in a published report, inserted in the newspapers, and thus conveyed from one end of the kingdom to the other.

This was not to be endured. The Treasury determined to sift the matter to the bottom. They knew that, neither at the Board of Treasury, nor at the Board of Customs, could any countenance or facility have been given to smuggling; but, they thought it not impossible, that this French house might have been guilty of the irregularities imputed to them, and that these irregularities might have been connived at by some of the inferior officers. The accusers, therefore, were called upon to substantiate their charge, and were distinctly told, that the inquiry should be directed in whatever mode they might point out as most effectual. They said, the clearest proof would probably be found in the Books of the party accused, if they could be got at. The Books could not, certainly, be inspected without his consent. Did he hesitate on

this point? So far from it, that his immediate reply was,—“ You are welcome to inspect all the Books of our house; and, that there may be no suspicion of garbling or concealment, let an officer go with me *instantly*, and they shall all be brought here” (to the Treasury) “ in a hackney coach.”

This was accordingly done. His books were subjected to a rigid examination. Every transaction connected with his business was found regular—the names of the weavers employed by him, the work which they had in hand, and their places of residence, were all duly entered. Taking with them a plan of Spital-Fields, and without the possibility of previous notice or concert, proper persons went round to the particular houses, which these books had pointed out; and, in every instance, they found the names of the men at work, and the goods upon which they were working, to correspond with the entries in the books.

All this was most satisfactory to the Treasury, and the Customs. But, the accusers persevered in their charge. They insisted, that the whole was a concerted plot; and that many pieces of silk in the warehouse of this foreigner, which he asserted that he had manufactured here, were, in truth, the productions of France.

The Treasury, in consequence, resolved to sift the matter still farther; and again, it was left to the accusers to point out the mode. In order to prosecute the inquiry, they selected from their own body, the person whom they considered the most skilled in the knowledge requisite for the detection of such articles as might be contraband. And what, towards him, was the conduct of the party accused? “ Go to my warehouse,” said the Frenchman, “ turn over all my goods; select from among them whatever pieces you please: and, on the proof of their being of English or of French manufacture, let my guilt or innocence be finally established.”

The offer was accepted. The person employed by the British manufacturers turned, over and over, several hundred pieces of Silk; and at length, after the whole ordeal was passed, the Board of Customs made known the result, in an official Report which they transmitted to the Treasury. That Report I hold in my hand. What is the substance of it? Why, that thirty-seven pieces had been selected by this agent of the accusers, as being, beyond all doubt, of French manufacture. What followed? These thirty-seven pieces were seized, and the Frenchman was put upon his proof, that they were made in this country. How did he prove it? By producing, one after another, the very men, by whom every one of these thirty-seven pieces had been made; who, upon their oaths, in the most irrefragable manner, that each of these goods had been woven by themselves—

Where? Not at Lyons—not in France—but in Spital-Fields and Manchester!

I have stated these facts with feelings, I own, bordering on disgust. I cannot but think it humiliating, if not discreditable, to my countrymen, that an unprotected foreigner should have been maligned and persecuted, instead of receiving countenance and encouragement, for having transported his capital and skill to this country, and for being the first to set the example of great and successful improvement in our silk manufacture.

But how does this detail, into which I have entered, bear upon the present argument? It shows, in the clearest manner, that if you continue to seize Silk goods in private houses, in shops, or upon individuals, you have now lost your former test, by which you could prove them to be of foreign origin. The most expert judge of such articles, it is now legally proved, cannot discriminate between the British and the foreign manufacture. Prohibition, therefore, has lost its only recommendation: it retains no advantage over a well-regulated duty.

But appeals have been made to our compassion; and our feelings have been alarmed by the statement, that above 500,000 individuals are at present engaged in the Silk trade, and that ruin must inevitably be entailed on this large and meritorious class of the community, if the old law be not restored.

Now, supposing the number of persons employed in the Silk manufactory to amount to 500,000,—their wages, I assume, cannot be less, one with another, than 10s. a week for each person. I have been told, indeed, that a considerable portion of this number are children, some of whom do not receive more than 1s. 6d. a week; and for this pittance, the hours of work in the mills, when the trade was brisk, I have been assured, were, from five in the morning, till eight or nine at night.

If this be so, let us not talk of the difference in the expense of labour, between this country and France. Will it be said, that a French child cannot earn in the Silk manufactory, one shilling and sixpence a week; and that, without working from fourteen to fifteen hours out of the four-and-twenty? Certainly not. Supposing, however, the average earnings of these 500,000 persons—(an exaggerated number, I am convinced)—to be ten shillings a week, thirteen millions of money would then be the annual amount of wages alone in this manufacture. To this are to be added the interest on capital, and the price of the raw material: so that the value of the goods sold could not be less than eighteen or twenty millions sterling. This, however, I consider too high a calculation. The Lords' Report estimates the whole amount at only ten millions; but, allowing for increased consumption since 1821, it

may, perhaps, be fairly rated at twelve or fourteen millions, exclusive of the quantity smuggled in from the continent.

If, then, fourteen millions of Silk goods are about the annual consumption of this kingdom, what would happen, if, according to the predictions of the honourable member for Taunton, the British manufacture should be annihilated after next July? We should not, I take it for granted, consume a less quantity of Silk goods: the only change would be, that we should have them, as it is alleged, of a better quality, and at a less price. But, all the goods so consumed would, in this supposition, have paid a duty of thirty per cent. on their importation; and the produce of that duty, consequently, would exceed four millions sterling. This large sum would be levied, without, in the smallest degree, abridging the comfort or enjoyment of any other class of the community. It would bring with it no increase of burthen upon the consumer of Silk goods, and consequently no diminution of his means of consuming other articles. It would simply be the premium of monopoly transferred to the Exchequer; and the capital, for which this monopoly was created, would be set free, to give employment to other branches of industry.

Such, certainly, would be the ultimate result, if the speculative fears of the Silk Trade should be realized. But, of such an issue, I am persuaded, there is no risk. The whole consumption of Silk goods in France is not equal to the consumption in England. Now, supposing, when the Bill comes into operation, there should be a greatly increased demand in this country for French Silks—this new and additional demand would produce a corresponding advance in the price of the goods, and in the wages of labour, in France. To a certain extent, there may be such a demand, especially at the first opening of the Trade; but I am convinced that, with the attention to economy which competition excites, with our improved machinery, our industry and ingenuity, and perhaps with the lowered prices of labour and the means of subsistence—a protecting duty of 30 per cent. will be found to be sufficient.

The House is called upon, by the motion of the honourable member for Coventry, "to inquire." Has it never inquired before? Has the House of Lords entered into no investigation of the subject? And did not that investigation take place at a period, when taxation and prices were very considerably higher than at present? The country, too, at that time, was labouring under much distress; and the Silk manufacture was suffering its full share of the existing difficulties. Was that inquiry loosely conducted? Certainly not. A noble Marquis* presided over the labours of the

* The Marquis of Lansdowne.

Committee, alike distinguished for talent, for diligence, and for the soundness of his views, on all subjects connected with the Commercial policy of the country. It was the opinion of that Committee, after taking a mass of evidence on oath, that a duty of fifteen per cent. would be an adequate protection, instead of a duty of double that amount, under which the experiment is now to be made.

I have stated, too much at length, I fear, the grounds on which it appears to me, that this House ought not to entertain the present motion. This statement, I feel, must have appeared unnecessary, to those who think with me on the subject of our Commercial Policy; and I dare not hope, that it has made much impression on those who are the declared advocates of the restrictive system;—those who belong to the same school of political economy as the honourable baronet, the member for Staffordshire. In his enmity to all improvement, he told us, the other evening, that the ministers of the present day were only fit to form a Council for the Island of Laputa. Since this intimation of the honourable Baronet's wish to see us banished to that island, I have turned in my own mind what recommendation I could take with me to that land of philosophers. Not a Letter from the honourable Baronet, I can assure him; for he has given us to understand, that in mind, at least, he belongs to the Brobdignagian age of this country. But, I think I have hit upon that which would infallibly make my fortune at Laputa;—I will tell the honourable Baronet what it is.

At the time of the great Bullion controversy in 1810–1811, the main question in dispute turned upon, what was the real Standard of our money. We wild theorists said, as our simple forefathers had always said before us, that the standard was, and could be, nothing else than the weight and fineness of the gold or silver in the coin of the realm, according to the commands of the Sovereign, specified in the indentures of the Mint. Had this definition been admitted by the practical men, there would at once have been an end of the contested point—whether our then currency was or was not depreciated? But, for that very reason, this definition was denied, by all who maintained the negative of that question. More than a hundred pamphlets were published on that side, containing as many different definitions of the standard. Fifteen of these definitions, most in vogue at the time, I have since retained, as a curiosity to laugh at: but they may now, perhaps, be turned to a more valuable purpose. Of that number I only recollect three at this moment. The first defined the standard to be, “the abstract pound sterling.” This had great success, till another practical writer proved, that the standard was the “ideal unit.” These two practical standards were, how-

ever, finally superseded by a third, of which the definition was, "a sense of value in currency (paper), in reference to commodities." This last standard was at once so perfectly tangible, and clearly intelligible, that I consider it as the parent of the famous Resolution of this House, by which the question was to be finally set at rest.

Now, if I should take with me to Laputa, this little, but invaluable, collection of Definitions, I have not the slightest doubt that my pretensions to have the whole monetary system of that island placed under my direction—to be Master of the Mint—Governor of the Bank—and Superintendent of all the Country Banks—would be immediately and generally admitted. It is true, we have had no authentic account of the progress of political science, in that celebrated island, for about a century past; but, it is scarcely to be imagined, that it can have been so rapid, as to enable their greatest philosophers to challenge the preeminence of these Definitions, on the score of abstraction, metaphysics, and absurdity: and, at any rate, if the philosophers should cabal against me, the practical men could not fail to be on my side.

I am not aware, Sir, that I have omitted to notice any of the objections, which have been urged against the important changes, lately made by Parliament in our Commercial System. That these changes are extensive, as well as important, I readily admit. Whether they will work ultimately, for good, or for evil, it becomes not fallible man to pronounce an over-peremptory opinion. That the expectation of those who proposed them was, that they would work for good, no man will do us the injustice to deny. That, up to this hour, I am fortified in that expectation, by the deductions of reason in my own mind, by the authority of all who are most competent to form a dispassionate opinion upon the subject, by the beneficial result of every thing which has hitherto been done, for giving greater freedom to Commerce in this country, and by the experience of the opposite effect which vexatious and unnecessary restraints are daily producing in other countries,—is what I can most solemnly affirm.

I make this declaration, I can assure you, Sir, in all sincerity of heart, and, as far as I know myself, without any mixture of false pride, or any mistaken feeling of obstinate adherence to consistency. I am the more anxious to make this declaration, in the face of the House, and of the world, because, of late, I have been assailed, and distressed, I will own, by ungenerous appeals to my feelings, calling upon me to commune with my conscience and my God, and to say, whether I am under no visitations of compunction and remorse, at having thrown so many persons out of bread, in the trial of a rash experiment, and in the pursuit of a hollow theory. Good God! Sir, that man must have a heart

of stone, who can witness without sympathy and the greatest pain, the distress, which now, unfortunately, exists in most of our other great manufactures, as well as in that of Silk. But, whilst I hope that I am not wanting in the duties and feelings of a man—I have also a duty to perform as a Minister. If immediate relief be, in a great degree, out of our power, it the more becomes us, as the guardians of all that is most valuable in civilized society, to trace the causes of the present calamities, and to prevent, if possible, their recurrence. It is on this principle, that I am anxious to put an end to a System of Currency, which leads to ruinous fluctuations in trade, and in the price of all commodities; which, whether in excitement or depression, is alike undermining the sober habits, and the moral feelings, of the community; which confounds honest industry with unprincipled gambling; which injures the poor man in the earnings of his labour, and takes from the rich man all security in his property—a System, which creates delusive hopes, only to terminate in aggravated disappointments—of which every succeeding convulsion must add to our inability to bear it—and of which the inevitable tendency is, to drive capital and industry to other countries; not in Europe only, but even across the Atlantic. The growing dread of instability here, the growing assurance of increased stability in those countries, would ultimately produce this transfer; and, with it, the further transfer of the rank and power, which England has hitherto maintained among the nations of the world.

If I have ventured to intrude upon the House by any allusion to my personal feelings, they will, I trust, make some allowance for the provocation which I have received. This is the only place in which I can properly reply to the unmanly appeals which have been made to me through other channels. Such appeals, however painful to receive, have no influence on my conduct: neither can they detract from the sanguine hope which I entertain of better prospects and increased happiness for my country. I hailed with great delight, the other evening, the assurance of the right honourable member for Knaresborough,* that he saw nothing in our present difficulties to create despondency or alarm. In this sentiment I most entirely concur. The existing pressure may, for a short time, bear heavily upon the springs of our prosperity; but if we pursue a temperate course, there is nothing to fear, and every thing to hope, for our future progress. With confidence I cling to that cheering hope; and, without looking forward to a long life, I trust that I shall witness its realization.

Whether in a public station, or in retirement, my greatest happiness will be, to feel assured, that the power and resources

* Mr. Tierney.

of this country have been increased, by those measures of Commercial Policy, which it has fallen to my lot to submit to Parliament.

That such will be their ultimate result is my firm and conscientious conviction; and, in that conviction, I claim for those measures the continued support of this House.

On Mr. Huskisson's resuming his seat, Mr. Baring rose; but the cries of "adjournment" and "go on" were so general, that the honourable gentleman seemed unwilling to proceed. Upon which, Mr. Canning observed, that if the question before the House were confined merely to the motion of the honourable member for Coventry, there could be no difficulty in disposing of it on that night; but as the eloquent and powerful speech of his right honourable friend had—most happily for the country—involved the whole of the principles on which the commerce of the country was to be conducted in future, he would move that the debate be adjourned till to-morrow. An adjournment accordingly took place to the 24th; when the motion was supported by Mr. Canning, Mr. Baring, Mr. Davenport, Mr. Dickenson, Mr. Peter Moore, and Mr. Egerton, and opposed by Mr. Grant, Mr. Warre, Mr. Palmer, and Lord John Russell.

The House divided: For Mr. Ellice's motion, 40. Against it, 222. Majority, 182.

EXPOSITION OF THE STATE OF THE NAVIGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

MAY 12th, 1828.

A Petition from the Ship Owners of North Shields having been presented to the House, on the 27th of April, complaining of the Alterations recently made in the Navigation Laws, Mr. Huskisson took occasion to give notice, that he would, on an early day, enter into an Exposition of the present State of the Navigation of the United Kingdom. Accordingly, this day,

Mr. Huskisson rose, and spoke in substance, as follows:—

Sir :—In the course of the last session of Parliament, the honourable member for Grampound* frequently took occasion to indulge himself in certain oracular denunciations, foreboding the ruin of this country, as the result of the Commercial and Foreign Policy of the Government. At that period, the commerce of the country, it must be allowed, was at least sufficiently active, and the demand for mercantile Shipping greater, perhaps, than had ever before occurred. Whether from these circumstances, or from the solemn tone of mystery in which the honourable member's denunciations were delivered, they did not, at the time, make any considerable impression, either in this House or out of doors.

Recently, however, a variety of Petitions have been presented to Parliament, from persons connected with the Port of London, and with several other commercial towns, expressing their apprehensions, that the Shipping Interest is in a state of decay, and that the foundations of the prosperity and security of the country are, in consequence, likely to be undermined. When such impressions have been created in quarters, where the authority of the Petitioners, so far as their observations go, is entitled to the greatest consideration, I trust that no apology will be requisite, for claiming the attention of the House—or at least of that portion of it who are now present—to a subject of such vital importance to the maritime power and greatness of the country. I am well aware of the reluctance which honourable gentlemen must feel to a statement, from its nature necessarily dry and tedious;

* Mr. Robertson.

but, I am also aware, that the matter involved in it is of too much importance not to demand the deepest attention; for, if the fears expressed in the petitions on the table of the House be well founded, it is scarcely necessary for me to say that the sooner an inquiry takes place the better.

The House, Sir, is aware, that our Navigation Laws have a two-fold object. First, to create and maintain in this country a great commercial Marine; and secondly (an object not less important in the eyes of statesmen), to prevent any other nation from engrossing too large a portion of the navigation of the rest of the world.

Acting upon this system, the general rule of our policy has been to limit as much as possible, the right of importing the productions of foreign countries into this country, either to ships of the producing country, or to British ships.

There certainly have been exceptions to this general rule, but it is the broad principle upon which the navigation system of this country was founded; and it is obvious, that the motives for adopting that system were, first, that such portion of the carrying trade of foreign countries as does not devolve to British shipping should be divided, as equally as possible, amongst the other maritime states, and not engrossed by any one of them in particular; and secondly, that countries entertaining relations of commerce with this country, and not possessing shipping of their own, should export their produce to England in British ships only, instead of employing the vessels of any third power.

But, when I state that the first object of our Navigation System was to create and uphold a great commercial marine, I think I may add, without fear of contradiction, that that object could not have been effected solely by regulations, restrictions, or prohibitions, however judiciously devised. The only true and durable foundation of a large commercial marine is to be laid in the means of affording to it beneficial employment. Without such employment, without, in short, extensive commerce, and great capital, to sustain and invigorate that commerce, no laws, merely protective, will avail. Whatever, therefore, contributes to extend the general commerce of the country must, incidentally, I may almost say directly, contribute also to improve and extend its navigation. These two great elements of our power and wealth are, of necessity, closely and intimately connected. I do not mean to say that their interests are always identified. I know they are not so. I know full well, that every thing which interferes with the freedom of commerce is more or less disadvantageous to the capitals which are employed in it. I am ready to admit, as consistent with this general principle, that the regulations of our Navigation System, however salutary they may be, must,

more or less, act as a restraint on that freedom of commercial pursuit, which it is desirable should be open to those who have capital to employ. I am, however, at the same time, bound to say, that those regulations are founded on the first and paramount law of every state, the highest ground of political necessity, the necessity of providing for our own safety and defence; the necessity of being prepared to afford security to our numerous colonial possessions scattered throughout all the seas of the world; the necessity of protecting the different branches of our widely spread commerce, against all the risks attendant on a state of war; and, lastly, the necessity of preserving our ascendancy on the ocean, and thereby sustaining the high station in the rank of nations, which that ascendancy, more than any other circumstance, has given to this country.

Entertaining these opinions, I am as ready as any man can possibly be, to say that it is our duty, on all occasions, to look to the peculiar nature of this State necessity;—and that, whenever the interests of commerce and navigation cannot be reconciled, the feeling which ought to be uppermost in our minds should be, —(I, Sir, have no hesitation in stating it to be my feeling)—that the interests of Commerce, in all such instances, ought to give way, and those of navigation to have the preference.

I trust that I have, in this brief statement, now placed myself fairly before the House. And, if the measures, recently adopted by his Majesty's Government, have laid this country open to the danger, with which, according to some, it is threatened, certainly I have imposed on myself no light task, in attempting to vindicate and defend those measures.

I begin with laying it down as a general position, that, in looking to the interest of the Ship-owner, we ought not to cramp commerce beyond the degree which state necessity requires for the protection of our navigation. I say that, apart from the considerations upon which the Navigation Laws were founded, we are bound not to depress one branch of industry, in order to give undue encouragement to another.

The questions, therefore, which we have to consider, are these—

First; whether the Alterations which have been made in the system of our Navigation Laws have, or have not, exposed the great public interests, for the support of which that system was established, to jeopardy and hazard?

Secondly; whether those alterations are such as to have placed any particular branches of the Shipping interest of the country in a situation of difficulty, such as to entitle them to specific consideration?

Thirdly; whether, in the alterations which have been adopted, his Majesty's Government have been actuated by a mere gratui-

tous desire to make experiments, and to try the effect of innovation; or whether those alterations, even if attended with some inconvenience to particular interests, were not called for by circumstances, in order to obviate greater inconvenience, which might have arisen to the general interest, if we had rigidly persisted in the course which we formerly pursued?

Now, Sir, before I join issue with those who call in question the necessity or expediency of the alterations which have been made in the system of our navigation laws, the House will, perhaps, permit me shortly to recall to their recollection the principal outlines of that system;—a course which is necessary, in order to mark more distinctly the alterations which have been made in it.

The Great Charter of the Navigation System of this country is the act of the twelfth of Charles the Second. The different modes which that act provided for the encouragement of shipping, may be arranged under the *five* following heads:—

First, the Fisheries. The ocean is a common field, alike open to all the people of the earth. Its productions belong to no particular nation. It was, therefore, our interest to take care that so much of those productions as might be wanted for the consumption of Great Britain, should be exclusively procured by British industry, and imported in British ships. This is so simple and reasonable a rule, that, in this part of our navigation system, no alteration whatever has been made; nor do I believe that any will ever be contemplated.

The *second* object which the Navigation Laws had in view was to give, to the shipping of this country, employment in what is called the *Coasting Trade*. When those laws were first passed, that trade was confined to England only; but, since we have become legislatively united with Scotland and with Ireland, it has embraced the whole of the British Islands. In this important part of our policy also there appears to be no motive for alteration. I shall, therefore, dismiss it with a single observation. The law, in this respect, remains unchanged, and will remain unchanged, so long as we have a desire to maintain a great commercial marine.

The *third* object of our Navigation System was the *European Trade*. The rule laid down, with regard to that trade, was—that the ships of the other states of Europe were to be at liberty to bring, from any port in Europe, any article of European production, with the exception of certain articles, since known in trade by the name of the “enumerated articles.” They amount in number to twenty-eight, and include those commodities which, being of the most bulky nature, employ the greatest quantity of shipping. With respect to these “enumerated articles,” the ex-

ception was this—that they should not be brought to our ports in any other than British ships, or ships of the country in which they were produced, proceeding directly from such country to this. This was the general state of the law, in respect to European Commerce, from the time of its enactment, in the twelfth of Charles the Second, down to a recent period. Its provisions, however, were more rigorous and exclusive towards Holland and the Low Countries. The regulations of that period were not framed merely for the preservation and encouragement of our own commerce, but also to weaken the powerful marine of Holland. Guided by this policy, our ancestors applied more severe measures towards the Dutch, than they thought necessary towards any other nation. In this spirit it was that they prohibited the importation, generally, of the productions of the other countries of Europe from Holland; instead of confining that prohibition to the twenty-eight enumerated articles.

The *fourth* object of our Navigation System was to regulate our commerce with *Asia, Africa, and America*. The rule of law on this head was, that no article, the produce of either of those three quarters of the globe, should be allowed to be brought into an English port, except in a British ship.

The *fifth* and last part of the System of our Navigation Laws related to our *Colonies*. The principle on which we acted towards those Colonies was strictly to confine them, in all matters of trade, to an intercourse with the Mother Country. They were not allowed to dispose of any of their produce, otherwise than by sending it in British vessels to this country. They were equally restricted from receiving any articles necessary for their consumption, except from this country, and in British bottoms.

This, I apprehend, is a fair summary of the main points of encouragement to the Shipping Interest of Great Britain, and of repression of the shipping of other states, aimed at by our Navigation laws, as those laws existed from the twelfth of Charles the Second down to the year 1783. In mentioning this latter period, I advert to it now as the commencement of that mighty change in the state of the world, the foundation of which had been then laid in the progress, and unfortunate issue, of the American war. But, before I state what that change has been, so far as relates to Navigation and Commerce, I shall, perhaps, be permitted briefly to notice some of the circumstances which had prepared the way for this calamitous contest:—the result of which, as I shall show presently, rendered the revision of our navigation system a matter no longer of choice but of necessity;—a result, which, in its consequences, in less than half a century, has dragged after it nearly the whole colonial system of the Old World.

tous desire to make experiments, and to try the effect of innovation; or whether those alterations, even if attended with some inconvenience to particular interests, were not called for by circumstances, in order to obviate greater inconvenience, which might have arisen to the general interest, if we had rigidly persisted in the course which we formerly pursued?

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The *third* object of our Navigation System was the *European Trade*. The rule laid down, with regard to that trade, was—that the ships of the other states of Europe were to be at liberty to bring, from any port in Europe, any article of European production, with the exception of certain articles, since known in trade by the name of the “enumerated articles.” They amount in number to twenty-eight, and include those commodities which, being of the most bulky nature, employ the greatest quantity of shipping. With respect to these “enumerated articles,” the ex-

ception was this—that they should not be brought to our ports in any other than British ships, or ships of the country in which they were produced, proceeding directly from such country to this. This was the general state of the law, in respect to European Commerce, from the time of its enactment, in the twelfth of Charles the Second, down to a recent period. Its provisions, however, were more rigorous and exclusive towards Holland and the Low Countries. The regulations of that period were not framed merely for the preservation and encouragement of our own commerce, but also to weaken the powerful marine of Holland. Guided by this policy, our ancestors applied more severe measures towards the Dutch, than they thought necessary towards any other nation. In this spirit it was that they prohibited the importation, generally, of the productions of the other countries of Europe from Holland; instead of confining that prohibition to the twenty-eight enumerated articles.

The *fourth* object of our Navigation System was to regulate our commerce with *Asia, Africa, and America*. The rule of law on this head was, that no article, the produce of either of those three quarters of the globe, should be allowed to be brought into an English port, except in a British ship.

The *fifth* and last part of the System of our Navigation Laws related to our *Colonies*. The principle on which we acted towards those Colonies was strictly to confine them, in all matters of trade, to an intercourse with the Mother Country. They were not allowed to dispose of any of their produce, otherwise than by sending it in British vessels to this country. They were equally restricted from receiving any articles necessary for their consumption, except from this country, and in British bottoms.

This, I apprehend, is a fair summary of the main points of encouragement to the Shipping Interest of Great Britain, and of repression of the shipping of other states, aimed at by our Navigation laws, as those laws existed from the twelfth of Charles the Second down to the year 1783. In mentioning this latter period, I advert to it now as the commencement of that mighty change in the state of the world, the foundation of which had been then laid in the progress, and unfortunate issue, of the American war. But, before I state what that change has been, so far as relates to Navigation and Commerce, I shall, perhaps, be permitted briefly to notice some of the circumstances which had prepared the way for this calamitous contest:—the result of which, as I shall show presently, rendered the revision of our navigation system a matter no longer of choice but of necessity;—a result, which, in its consequences, in less than half a century, has dragged after it nearly the whole colonial system of the Old World.

Sir, the war which began in the year 1756, commonly called the Seven Years' War, was, strictly speaking, so far as relates to this country and to the Bourbon governments of France and Spain, a war for colonial privileges, colonial claims, and colonial ascendancy. In the course of that war, British skill and British valour placed in the hands of this country Quebec and the Havannah. By the capture of these fortresses, Great Britain became mistress of the colonial destinies of the Western world. What use we made of our successes in that quarter, I will not now stop to inquire.

But if the proceedings of the Government of this country, after the peace of 1763, be closely examined, we shall find, that many of the causes which, ten years afterwards, led to the unfortunate rupture with our then colonies, now the United States of America, may be traced to our unseasonable attempts to enforce, in their most rigid and exclusive application, our Colonial and Navigation System. Every complaint, every petition, every remonstrance, against the oppressive tendency, and vexatious consequences, of that system, on the part of the inhabitants of New England,—every temperate effort made by them to obtain some slight relaxation of the trammels that shackled their disposition to engage in commercial enterprize,—were only met, on the part of the British Government, by a constant succession of new laws, enforcing still more restrictive regulations, framed in a spirit of still more vexatious interference. One instance of the character of that legislation will be sufficient; and I give it, as a slight specimen of the commercial jealousy which prevailed in our Councils, in reference both to the colonies and to Ireland.

A ship from our American possessions, laden with their produce, was stranded on the coast of Ireland. It will naturally be supposed that the cargo was landed, and the ship repaired in that country. No such thing. The law compelled the owners to send another English ship from England, for the purpose of bringing away the cargo: a cargo which, not improbably, might then be wanted in the Irish market, and which was, perhaps, destined to be ultimately consumed there, after having been trans-shipped in a port of that country, landed in an English port, and again re-shipped to Ireland.

This is a sample of the real grievances under which our American colonies laboured. Such a state of law could not fail to engender great dissatisfaction, and much heart-burning. It is generally believed, that the attempt to tax our American colonies, without their consent, was the sole cause of the separation of those Colonies from the mother country. But, if the whole history of the period between the year 1763 and the year 1773 be truly examined, it will, I think, be abundantly evident, that,

however the attempt at taxation may have contributed somewhat to hasten the explosion, the train had been long laid, in the severe and exasperating efforts of this country, to enforce, with inopportune and increasing vigour, the strictest and most annoying regulations of our Colonial and Navigation Code. Every petty adventure in which the colonists embarked, was viewed, by the merchants of this country, and the Board of Trade of that day, as an encroachment on the commercial monopoly of Great Britain. The professional subtlety of Lawyers, and the practical ingenuity of Custom-house Officers, were constantly at work in ministering to the jealous but mistaken views of our sea-ports. Blind to the consequences elsewhere, they persevered in their attempts to put down the spirit of commercial enterprize in the people of New England, until those attempts roused a very different spirit;—that spirit which ventured to look for political independence from the issue of a successful rebellion.

The result is well known. The country found itself engaged in a civil war. That war, in its progress, involved us in the greatest difficulty and embarrassment. It was terminated by submitting to humiliations such as, I trust to God, the Crown of Great Britain will never again be exposed to.

America was not the only part of our dominions in which we were called to pay the penalty of humiliation. Ireland, towards which we had acted in the same spirit of commercial jealousy as towards our American colonies, took advantage of our difficulties, and refused any longer to hold her industry and trade subject to our system of exclusion. To the Parliament and Volunteers of Ireland we had also to capitulate. If the capitulation was mortifying to the pride of England, fortunately it neither compromised our honour, nor involved any concession beyond what was strictly a debt of justice to Ireland. The benefits of our Commercial and Navigation System were extended to her. She was permitted to trade direct to the Colonies, and placed rather upon the footing of a partner than that of a dependent, in the concerns of the British empire.

If I have gone into this detail, I have done so, because it appeared to me necessary, as bearing, in a peculiar manner, upon the question now before the House. The immediate lesson which I draw from it is this,—that it is a part of political wisdom, when danger is foreseen, not supinely to wait for its approach, but, as far as possible, to take timely measures for its prevention.

The peace with America gave the first great blow to the Navigation System of this country. There had now arisen an independent state in the New World. Our colonies had fought for, and had taken, a station in the rank of nations. They had

now interests in navigation to attend to, and a commerce of their own to protect. It therefore became imperative on this country, unless we were prepared to relinquish all trade with America, to conform to circumstances. It was impossible for us, in this new state of things, to enforce the system of our Navigation Laws, which, until then, we had so rigidly insisted upon. That part of the system which provided, that none of the productions of Asia, Africa, or America, should be imported into England, except in British vessels, could no longer be adhered to.

After the peace of 1783, and before the General Congress of America had established that system of government, under which the people of the United States now live,—a work which was not completed until the year 1787,—each of the different States, then composing the Union, was at liberty to act independently of the others in matters relating to its trade with foreign countries. Accordingly, almost every State established a different rule of commercial intercourse with this country. The general character, however, of their legislation, was conceived in a spirit of peculiar hostility (not unnatural, perhaps, so soon after the exasperation excited by civil discord) against trade with Great Britain. In some of those states, indeed, British merchants were prohibited from trading with them altogether: in others, heavier duties were specifically imposed upon British merchandize; and in all, a desire was manifested to give a decided preference to the goods of other countries.

This state of things continued until the year 1787, when the General Congress met, and one uniform system of commercial policy was laid down. By that system, a heavy blow was aimed at the Navigation of this country. It was resolved, that all foreign ships, trading to America, should pay half a dollar, which was afterwards raised to a dollar per ton duty, beyond what was paid by national ships. And further, that goods imported in foreign vessels should pay a duty of ten per cent., over and above what was demandable on the same description of goods imported in American vessels.

This system,—in the adoption of which the Americans had, in a considerable degree, followed the example of their English ancestors,—was likely to become seriously prejudicial to the commerce and navigation of this country. The proper authorities, therefore, set about considering what was to be done, in order to counteract it. The Board of Trade had recourse, for advice, to the most eminent merchants and practical men; and various projects were started on the occasion. One plan proposed to give a duty on all goods exported to America in British ships. A second, to impose a duty on all articles carried out of this country in American ships. A third, to retaliate upon the Americans,

and, following their example, to lay a specific duty on American ships, and on goods imported in those ships. These and various other plans, having the same object in view, on being sifted and examined, were found to be open to insuperable objections. It was shown that, without attaining their object, they would prove injurious to the manufactures and commerce of this country; and all of them were, in consequence, abandoned.

After this inquiry, and a long struggle to counteract the Navigation System of America, without in any degree relaxing our own, this country found it necessary to adopt the system of Reciprocity, on which, since the year 1815, the commercial intercourse between the two countries has been placed; namely, equality of all charges upon the ships belonging to either country in the ports of the other, and a like equality of duty upon all articles the production of the one country, imported into the other, whether such importation be made in the ships of the one or the other. In the practical consequences of this arrangement, our adherence to another part of our navigation laws, instead of serving, appears to me to have shackled the shipping interest of this country. Our law still provides that goods, the produce of Asia, Africa, or America, shall not be imported in foreign ships, unless they be the ships of the country of which the goods are the produce. The Americans retaliate this restriction by applying it to all goods the produce of Europe. An American ship trading to this country has, in consequence, a great advantage over a British ship trading to America. The American vessel, on her voyage to England, is freighted with a cargo wholly produced in the United States. She has nothing else to bring here. For her return to America she may load in the ports of this country with a cargo, partly the produce or manufacture of Great Britain, and partly of any other country. The British ship is debarred from this advantage. Her cargo, when trading to the United States, must be exclusively of British origin. For instance, an American vessel, at the port of Liverpool, may take nine-tenths of her cargo, in articles the produce of Lancashire, and the remainder may be made up of brandies, wines, or the produce of any other part of the world, to be procured at Liverpool. But, if an English ship, proceeding to the United States, were to take a single cask of brandy, or a single pipe of wine, she would be liable to seizure and forfeiture. Is it not, therefore, fairly to be presumed, that a further relaxation of our System, to the extent of allowing the importation, from the United States, of goods, the produce of any part of the world, in American shipping, on condition of the like privilege being granted to British ships in the ports of the United States,—however departing from the

the policy of our ancestors,—would be rather an advantage than an injury to the shipping interest?

Shortly after the commercial legislation of the United States had assumed, in 1787, a regular shape, and an uniform character, the war of the French Revolution broke out; a war which lasted nearly a quarter of a century. The course of this war was marked by so many strange and anomalous circumstances, both by land and upon the ocean;—so large a portion of the continent of Europe, including nearly all its trading and maritime communities, became subjected to the despotism of one great military power;—that despotism was exerted in so extraordinary a manner to crush maritime commerce;—that it would be vain to enter upon the history of our Navigation System, or of that of other countries, during this long contest. It is, however, certain that the commerce of the United States of America, which was the only, at least almost the only, neutral power that could trade in safety, was greatly benefited by the war. It is equally true, that Great Britain, being well able to protect her commercial marine, in consequence of her vast naval superiority, did extend that commercial marine, in spite of all difficulties, whilst that of the other countries of Europe was greatly reduced. It is unnecessary for me, as the facts are so well known, to dwell further on the circumstances of that war. We may, therefore, as far as relates to the present question, pass over the period between 1792 and 1815.

At the latter period, peace being restored, and with it the independence of the states which had been incorporated with France, the commerce of the world began to revert to its ancient channels. The nations of Europe, whose flags had, for so long a series of years, disappeared from the ocean, were now naturally anxious that their own trade should be carried on in their own ships. This gave a check to the shipping of the United States, which was also felt by the shipping of this country. Perhaps in a greater degree by our own shipping, in consequence of the restitution of several extensive and valuable colonies, which we had captured and held during the war.

Besides this material circumstance, there were others, to which I will briefly advert, which had a natural and inevitable tendency to interfere with, and diminish, the employment for shipping in this country.

The first to which I shall allude is the Abolition of the Slave Trade. They who are old enough to remember—and I am one of the number,—the early debates which took place on this subject will recollect, that the arguments in opposition to the measure were grounded chiefly on the danger with which it threatened Shipping Interests of the country. The necessity of kid-

napping cargoes of slaves on the coast of Africa was, at that time, as coolly defended, on the score of encouragement to our marine, as the taking of cod-fish on the Banks of Newfoundland could be at the present day. That traffic was, however, abolished in 1806; and, happy I am, that the interests of humanity, and the honour of the English name, were, from that year, no longer sacrificed to the plea of the shipping interest; though I may, I think, fairly adduce the abolition of the slave trade as having taken away one source of employment.

After the general pacification of Europe, but before we dismantled our fleet, we insisted on the powers of Barbary desisting from the practices of maritime warfare, carried on by cruisers under their flags, in the Mediterranean. These corsairs were constantly taking prisoners, either for the sake of ransom, or for the purpose of carrying them into slavery. Whilst this system was tolerated, scarcely any trading vessels, those of Great Britain excepted, could navigate that sea in safety. In this state of things, it was highly honourable to this country to have used her naval power,—the dread of which had constantly ensured respect for her own flag,—for the purpose of procuring an equal degree of security for the navigation of all christian states. This was no positive duty which we were bound to perform. We were not called upon by any international engagement, nor by any moral obligation, as in the case of the slave trade. The act was one of spontaneous generosity. But, however high-minded in principle, it is not the less true that the result of our interference was injurious to the shipping interest of this country, in the Mediterranean. Since the bombardment of Algiers, the flag of every petty state, bordering on that sea, floats in equal security with our own. I am not accurately informed what was the quantity of British shipping employed in the carrying and coasting trade of those states before this change, but I have heard it stated, in this House, by one likely to be well informed,—the late Mr. Marryatt,—that from eight to ten thousand British seamen, and from seven to eight hundred British vessels, were engaged in that commerce. Consequently, to that extent has the employment for British ships been diminished in the Mediterranean.

But these were not the only circumstances, at the close of the late war, which had a tendency to reduce the amount of our Shipping. With the termination of hostilities, there was necessarily a diminished demand for ships in the public service. The greatest proportion of those which had been taken up as hired transports was discharged. I have obtained a statement of their number and tonnage, as they stood at the termination of the war—and of the number and tonnage of those employed at the pre-

sent period. The diminution is not less than 1,226 vessels, amounting to 270,382 tons.

In the next place, we had to sell out of the King's service a number of vessels, which were no longer wanted in the navy. I do not advert to ships of the line, or to frigates of the large class, which are always sold, subject to the condition, that they shall be broken up. Of this latter description of ships I take no notice; but confine my statement to vessels of smaller burthen, adapted to other purposes than those of war, and which are consequently not required to be so broken up. Of this class, there has been sold no less a number than three hundred and thirty-three, the amount of their tonnage being 93,530 tons. So that, if we add to the number of transports discharged the number of ships sold, we shall find that his Majesty's Government have set free, to compete with the commercial marine of the country, 1,559 vessels, amounting in tonnage to 363,912 tons; a quantity nearly equal to one-fourth of the whole shipping of the country, as it stood in the year 1793, at the commencement of the late war.

But this is not all. If the difference of circumstances under which trade is carried on, in time of peace and in time of war, be taken into consideration, we shall find that, in the former period, a much smaller number of vessels is required for the same extent of transactions, than in the latter. In time of peace, the moment a ship has landed her cargo, she is at liberty to sail again, and is despatched on another voyage as soon as possible. During the last war, we were obliged, in almost all cases, to place our merchant ships under the protection of convoy; and, in spite of all the exertions of the Admiralty, it was frequently difficult to provide convoys, as expeditiously as the interests of commerce would have required. Four or five hundred merchantmen were sometimes collected together at one point before the required protection could be afforded to them. And when, at length, these large bodies of shipping did proceed to sea, they were under the necessity of keeping together; so that the rate of sailing, during a whole voyage, was necessarily to be regulated by the progress of the slowest sailing vessel. In time of peace it is otherwise. Ships can then traverse the ocean singly, without fear of interruption; and in their passage from one port to another, as well as in loading and unloading, every exertion is used to ensure despatch. An instance occurred lately at Liverpool, of a large West-Indiaman arriving from Barbadoes, landing her cargo, and sailing again for that island, in the course of one week. The multiplication and convenience of docks have also greatly contributed to obviate delay in the discharge and loading of vessels. Upon the whole, I shall not be overstating the proportion when I say that two-thirds of the number of vessels,

necessary in time of war, are fully sufficient for all the purposes of the same extent of commerce, in time of peace.

There is yet another circumstance to which, before I quit this part of the subject, I must refer. I mean the alteration made in the year 1815, in the foreign Corn trade of the country. During the war, this trade afforded regular employment to no inconsiderable quantity of shipping, but since the law has been altered, and the ports have been generally shut against the importation of foreign corn, that employment has ceased. In a desultory intercourse, like that which alone can exist under the present law, the opening of the ports being sudden, and, in most cases, uncertain, till the quarterly average is declared, it is almost impossible that the trade, when permitted, should not fall into the hands of the foreign ship-owner. The period for which the ports may continue open being limited to a few weeks, the persons who wish to take advantage of that opening, instead of fitting out ships in our ports, send their orders to the continent, with directions to forward the corn by any vessels that can be procured on the spot. Hence the almost exclusive employment of foreign shipping in this occasional trade.

I must now crave the indulgence of the House while I show what was the situation of this country, with regard to its Shipping, previous to the last war. In 1792, one of the most prosperous years which the country has ever known,—the year immediately preceding the breaking out of that war, in which we were called upon to make such immense efforts to maintain our naval superiority—the number of registered ships in the several ports of the British empire was 16,079; the amount of their tonnage 1,540,145 tons. In the present year, that is to say, in the year ended the 31st of December, 1825, the number of registered ships was 24,174; and the amount of their tonnage 2,542,216 tons; showing an increase of one-third in the number of ships, and of two-fifths in the tonnage, within that period.

Having stated the number and tonnage of our registered vessels at the commencement of the late war, I will now show what they were at its close. In 1815, the number was 24,860, and the amount of their tonnage 2,681,276 tons. It appears, therefore, that there has been, since the conclusion of the war, a decrease in our shipping of 686 vessels, and 139,060 tons; but I have, I think, shown satisfactorily that, upon the return of peace in 1815, our commercial marine was greatly in excess of what was requisite, in the then altered situation of the country.

As connected with this part of our inquiry, it is material to ascertain the number of vessels that have been built in the British dominions, since the termination of the late war, and to compare it with the number built in former periods. It is with

tous desire to make experiments, and to try the effect of innovation; or whether those alterations, even if attended with some inconvenience to particular interests, were not called for by circumstances, in order to obviate greater inconvenience, which might have arisen to the general interest, if we had rigidly persisted in the course which we formerly pursued?

Now, Sir, before I join issue with those who call in question the necessity or expediency of the alterations which have been made in the system of our navigation laws, the House will, perhaps, permit me shortly to recall to their recollection the principal outlines of that system;—a course which is necessary, in order to mark more distinctly the alterations which have been made in it.

The Great Charter of the Navigation System of this country is the act of the twelfth of Charles the Second. The different modes which that act provided for the encouragement of shipping, may be arranged under the *five* following heads:—

First, the Fisheries. The ocean is a common field, alike open to all the people of the earth. Its productions belong to no particular nation. It was, therefore, our interest to take care that so much of those productions as might be wanted for the consumption of Great Britain, should be exclusively procured by British industry, and imported in British ships. This is so simple and reasonable a rule, that, in this part of our navigation system, no alteration whatever has been made; nor do I believe that any will ever be contemplated.

The *second* object which the Navigation Laws had in view was to give, to the shipping of this country, employment in what is called the *Coasting Trade*. When those laws were first passed, that trade was confined to England only, but, since we have become legislatively united with Scotland and with Ireland, it has embraced the whole of the British Islands. In this important part of our policy also there appears to be no motive for alteration. I shall, therefore, dismiss it with a single observation. The law, in this respect, remains unchanged, and will remain unchanged, so long as we have a desire to maintain a great commercial marine.

The *third* object of our Navigation System was the *European Trade*. The rule laid down, with regard to that trade, was—that the ships of the other states of Europe were to be at liberty to bring, from any port in Europe, any article of European production, with the exception of certain articles, since known in trade by the name of the “enumerated articles.” They amount in number to twenty-eight, and include those commodities which, being of the most bulky nature, employ the greatest quantity of shipping. With respect to these “enumerated articles,” the ex-

ception was this—that they should not be brought to our ports in any other than British ships, or ships of the country in which they were produced, proceeding directly from such country to this. This was the general state of the law, in respect to European Commerce, from the time of its enactment, in the twelfth of Charles the Second, down to a recent period. Its provisions, however, were more rigorous and exclusive towards Holland and the Low Countries. The regulations of that period were not framed merely for the preservation and encouragement of our own commerce, but also to weaken the powerful marine of Holland. Guided by this policy, our ancestors applied more severe measures towards the Dutch, than they thought necessary towards any other nation. In this spirit it was that they prohibited the importation, generally, of the productions of the other countries of Europe from Holland; instead of confining that prohibition to the twenty-eight enumerated articles.

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The *fifth* and last part of the System of our Navigation Laws related to our *Colonies*. The principle on which we acted towards those Colonies was strictly to confine them, in all matters of trade, to an intercourse with the Mother Country. They were not allowed to dispose of any of their produce, otherwise than by sending it in British vessels to this country. They were equally restricted from receiving any articles necessary for their consumption, except from this country, and in British bottoms.

This, I apprehend, is a fair summary of the main points of encouragement to the Shipping Interest of Great Britain, and of repression of the shipping of other states, aimed at by our Navigation laws, as those laws existed from the twelfth of Charles the Second down to the year 1783. In mentioning this latter period, I advert to it now as the commencement of that mighty change in the state of the world, the foundation of which had been then laid in the progress, and unfortunate issue, of the American war. But, before I state what that change has been, so far as relates to Navigation and Commerce, I shall, perhaps, be permitted briefly to notice some of the circumstances which had prepared the way for this calamitous contest:—the result of which, as I shall show presently, rendered the revision of our navigation system a matter no longer of choice but of necessity;—a result, which, in its consequences, in less than half a century, has dragged after it nearly the whole colonial system of the Old World.

tainly not borne out their predictions, or justified their alarms. But it would be uncandid to deny, that we have not yet sufficient experience to warrant a positive conclusion that, prospectively, the Shipping of the Prussian ports may not gain ground in the competition with our own. I am the more induced to make this remark, as, from the excessive excitement, and overtrading of the last year, I am ready to acknowledge that, taken by itself, it cannot be considered as affording an estimate for the future: neither on the other hand, perhaps, will it be fair, in 1827, to form such an estimate from the experience of the present year, which it is much to be feared, as a natural consequence of the late excess, will be one of severe depression in the trade of this country.

Having adverted to the apprehensions which are entertained respecting our Trade with the ports of the Baltic, I have naturally been most anxious to sift to the bottom this important part of our inquiry. I know no mode so satisfactory of ascertaining what have been the fluctuations in the trade, either as respects our own share of it, at different periods, or the proportion which that share bears to the trade of other Powers with the ports of the Baltic, as a reference to the annual Returns of the vessels, of all nations, which have passed the Sound in a given number of years. Fortunately the State Paper Office has furnished me with these returns. This account I hold in my hand, from the year 1783 to the year 1792, with the exception of the year 1789; the returns for which year have been either lost or mislaid. I also hold in my hand a similar account, from the year 1816 to the year 1825, both inclusive.* The comparison of these two periods, each of ten years, (both periods of peace) appears to me to afford a fair illustration of this branch of trade. I am happy to say that the result will be found highly satisfactory; for it will be seen that the number of British ships which passed the Sound in the year 1825, was not only positively greater than it was in any one of the twenty years to which I have referred, but that its proportion, with respect to the number of vessels from all other nations, was equally favourable to this country. It would be going into an unnecessary detail to give the numbers for every year of the twenty; I shall, therefore, confine myself to the five last years. The total number of ships which passed the Sound was:—

	British Ships.	Ships of all other Nations.
In the year 1821	2,819	6,358
Do. 1822	3,097	5,386
Do. 1823	3,016	6,187
Do. 1824	3,540	6,978
Do. 1825	5,186	7,974

* Parl. Papers, 1826, v. xxii. n. 360.

So that, looking at the proportion which Great Britain has been able to retain of the Trade of the Baltic, it appears that, last year, when the total number of vessels which passed the Sound exceeded that of any former year, British Shipping engrossed considerably more than one-third of the whole navigation of that sea, and had increased very nearly two-fifths, compared with the average of the four preceding years. The papers to which I have referred I propose to move for, so that the House will be able to judge from them of the correctness of my statement.

In consequence of the restoration of peace, the demand for shipping, as I have already remarked, was much diminished, and the rates of freight were considerably lowered after the year 1815. This gave rise to great complaints on the part of the Shipping Interest. In the hope of finding some remedy for their difficulties, the House, in the year 1820, appointed a Select Committee to inquire into the state of our Foreign Commerce. My right honourable friend, the Master of the Mint,* now absent, I am sorry to say, from indisposition, presided over the labours of that committee, and prosecuted the inquiry, in several succeeding sessions, with a degree of zeal, diligence, and ability, for which the country is greatly indebted to my right honourable friend. One change recommended by that committee, in the Navigation Laws, was to the following effect:—that whereas certain goods, which I have already described as known in trade under the designation of "*enumerated articles*," could only be imported in British ships, or in ships of the country in Europe of which they were the produce, and directly from that country, it was the opinion of the committee that the law ought to be so far relaxed, as to allow the importation of these articles in the ships of any country into which they had been previously imported.

The recommendation of the Committee was adopted by the legislature. That this relaxation has been beneficial to our Commerce and Navigation is now, I believe, placed beyond all doubt. It afforded a great facility to the execution of another project, emanating from the same Committee, and since also carried into effect;—that of establishing a general system of Warehousing, so as to make this country a place of entrepôt for all foreign commodities. It was obviously impossible to give full scope to this system, unless we were prepared to allow greater latitude to the admission of foreign goods. The superior capital and credit of this country afford inducements to send those goods here, and their being deposited in British warehouses gives a facility to the British Merchant and Ship-owner to supply the demand for them

* The right honourable Thomas Wallace; the present Lord Wallace.

in other parts of the world, through the medium of British adventure and British shipping, instead of their being sent directly to those parts in foreign shipping, from the countries of Europe in which such goods are produced.

It was desirable, therefore, for the interest of our Foreign trade, that we should no longer rigidly adhere to that part of the Navigation Act which prohibited the importation of the "enumerated articles," if brought from countries other than those of which they were the produce. Such a restraint, it is hardly necessary to say, could not fail frequently to prevent speculations of trade, in which the spirit of British enterprise would have otherwise engaged, or to throw those speculations into other channels. It interfered, likewise, to prevent the advantageous assortment of cargoes, and other commercial arrangements, as well in foreign ports as in the ports of this country; and, in this and many other ways, contributed, directly and indirectly, to diminish the employment for British shipping.

Another alteration in our Navigation System has since been adopted, which certainly ought not to have been so long delayed. This alteration consists in putting the trade between Great Britain and Ireland upon the footing of a Coasting trade. Every gentleman must, I think, see that, from the time at least of the union of the two countries, it was desirable that their interests and commercial system should be identified as much as possible. From that period it was absurd to consider the commercial intercourse with Ireland as a part of our foreign trade, and to subject the shipping employed in it to the restrictive regulations and higher charges of that trade.

But these were not the only deviations from the ancient rules of our Navigation System. The revolutions which have occurred in the political state of the world, in our time, rendered other changes indispensable. There has grown up over the whole continent of America, a situation of affairs similar to that which the United States presented, after their separation from the mother country. This change from a colonial to an independent existence, necessarily draws after it, in each particular case, the application of the new rule, which, as I have already stated, unavoidably grew out of the independence of the United States.

The first application of that rule occurred in respect to Brazil. From the moment when, in 1808, the house of Braganza transferred the seat of empire to Brazil, that country virtually ceased to be a colony. Great Britain had no choice but to apply the European principles to the commerce and navigation of Brazil, though out of Europe, and to admit Portuguese shipping,—and, since the separation of Portugal and Brazil, Brazilian shipping,—

coming from that country into our ports, upon the same footing as the ships of any other independent nation.

This principle has been extended, from time to time, as new States have risen up in America. When I heard the honourable member for Grampound complain that, in our Treaty of Commerce and Navigation with Colombia, and in that with Buenos Ayres, we had consented to place their navigation upon an equality with our own, I certainly listened to this charge with no small degree of surprise, being satisfied that what the honourable gentleman censured so severely was the very wisest principle that this country could adopt. Those states were anxious to encourage their commercial marine, by granting exclusive advantages to their own shipping, and imposing certain restrictions upon that of this country. This disposition was frequently manifested by the Ministers of those States in the course of our discussions with them; and certainly there are not wanting some who are constantly endeavouring to excite in these new countries a jealousy of the Naval Power of Great Britain; instigating them to adopt a separate and novel code of maritime law for the New World, and to frame their Navigation System upon principles of giving a preference to their own shipping, and to that of America generally, over the shipping of this country and of Europe.

Have we acquiesced in these views? Have we compromised any of the acknowledged principles of Maritime Law? No, Sir—Whilst we have explicitly refused to listen to any such compromise, we have disarmed all suspicion as to our commercial pretensions, by frankly declaring, that we sought no exclusive advantages for British ships or British trade, and that the principle of our intercourse with the New States, as with the Old States, of the World, would be that of a fair and equal reciprocity.

This brings me to the *gravamen* of the charge made against his Majesty's Government; namely, the step taken by them, in furtherance of this principle, by the introduction of a law, enabling the Crown, with the advice of the Privy Council, to remit all discriminating duties on the goods and shipping of such countries, as may agree to impose no higher charges or duties upon British ships, and the goods imported therein, than upon their own ships, and the like goods imported in such ships.

If the system of discriminating Duties for the encouragement of Shipping, were a secret known to this country alone; if a similar system were not, or could not be, put in force in every other country, I should not be standing here to vindicate the measure to which I have just referred, and the present policy of his Majesty's Government. So long as, in fact, no independent trading community existed out of Europe, and so long as the old

Governments of Europe looked upon these matters,—if they looked to them at all,—as little deserving their attention, and were content, either from ignorance or indifference, not to thwart our System, it would have been wrong to disturb any part of it. But is this the present state of the world? Did not the United States of America, in the first instance, for the purpose of raising to themselves a great commercial Marine, and of counteracting our Navigation Laws, adopt, in their utmost rigour, the rules of those laws, and carry, even further than we had ever done, in respect to foreign Ships, this principle of discriminating duties against our Shipping? Can we shut our eyes to the fact that other nations have followed, or are following, their example? Do we not see them, one after the other, taking a leaf out of our own book? Is not every Government in Europe, if possessed of sea-ports, now using its utmost endeavours to force a trade, and to raise up for itself a commercial Marine? Have we not boasted of our Navigation Laws, till we have taught other nations to believe (however erroneous that belief), that they are almost the only requisite, or, at least, the *sine quâ non*, of commercial wealth and of maritime power? Did these vauntings excite no envy, no spirit of rivalry, no countervailing opposition in other countries? Did the success of the United States of America create no desire in those countries to follow her example?

It would be worse than idle, it would be dangerous, to dissemble to ourselves the great changes which have been wrought, since the establishment of American independence, in the views and sentiments of Europe, upon all matters connected with commerce and navigation. They now occupy a leading share in the attention of almost every Government. They are everywhere a subject of general inquiry and interest. Even in countries, of which the institutions are least favourable to the discussion of political topics, these questions are freely discussed, and, by discussion, the influence of public opinion is made to bear upon the measures and policy of their Governments.

In this altered state of the world, it became our duty seriously to inquire, whether a system of commercial hostility, of which the ultimate tendency is mutual prohibition,—whether a system of high discriminating duties upon foreign ships, with the moral certainty of seeing those duties fully retaliated upon our own Shipping, in the ports of foreign countries,—was a contest in which England was likely to gain, and out of which, if persevered in, she was likely to come with dignity or advantage? I will lay aside, for the moment, every consideration of a higher nature, moral or political, which would naturally lead us to look with some repugnance to the engaging in such a contest. I will equally lay aside all consideration for the interest of our manu-

facturers, and for the general well-being of our population, who as consumers, would obviously have to pay for this system of Custom-house warfare, and reciprocal restriction; and I will view the question solely in reference to the shipping interest. In this comparatively narrow, but, I admit, not unimportant, view of the question, I have no difficulty in stating my conviction,—a conviction at which I have arrived after much anxious consideration,—that, in the long-run, this war of Discriminating Duties, if persevered in on both sides, must operate most to the injury of the country which, at the time of entering upon it, possesses the greatest commercial marine. How can it be otherwise? What are these discriminating duties, but a tax upon commerce and navigation? Will not the heaviest share of that tax fall, therefore, upon those who have the greatest amount of shipping and of trade?

Before we embark in such a contest, we owe to the character of the country, as well as to its interests, to satisfy ourselves;—first, that it is necessary for its welfare; and,—secondly, that once committed to the trial with all the commercial powers of Europe, the country would have the firmness and fortitude necessary to go through with it. Do not let gentlemen too hastily decide this last point in the affirmative. Let them call to their recollection the famous Orders in Council;—let them, above all, bear in mind, that we have yet had but one trial of this discriminating warfare,—the trial with the United States of America,—and that we came out of that trial, after several years' perseverance, by conceding the very object, for the maintenance of which it had been carried on. Would it be politic, or dignified, to engage in a like struggle in Europe, with the risk of arriving at the same result? In commerce, in navigation, in naval power, and maritime pretensions, the United States are our most formidable rival; and we are now arraigned for not withholding from Prussia and Denmark, what parliament and the country, ten years ago, concurred in yielding to America.

Under what circumstances did England found her Navigation System? When her commercial marine was, comparatively, insignificant, her wealth inconsiderable, before manufactures were established, and when she exported corn, wool, and other raw materials. When, on the other hand, Holland and the Netherlands were rich, possessed of great manufactures, and of the largest portion of the carrying trade of Europe and the world. What has followed? The commercial marine of the latter countries has dwindled away, and that of Great Britain is now immense. But, in the progress of the change, England is become the great seat of manufactures and trading wealth, frequently importing, and never exporting, corn; drawing raw materials

from, and sending out manufactured goods to, all parts of the world. This was our state, though in a far less degree than at present, when America became independent. She started by applying towards us the system, which we had applied towards Holland. She was then poor, with a very small commercial marine, without manufactures, having corn and raw materials to export;—and we know what her shipping now is. Let gentlemen reflect on these circumstances, before they decide that it is necessarily wise to enter upon a similar contest with other poor and unmanufacturing countries. Let them seriously consider, whether a system of discriminating duties,—now that the exclusive *patent* by which we held that system is expired,—is not the expedient of such a country as I have described,—rather than the resource of one which already possesses the largest commercial marine in the world. They will then see, that it may possibly be a wise policy to divert such countries from that system, rather than to goad them on, or even leave them a pretext for going into it.

Let us for a moment, however, suppose that, at all hazards, we have embarked in this warfare of Counteracting Duties. They who recommend this policy have no right to assume that, in the progress of the struggle, the discriminating duties imposed in the foreign country (Prussia, for example) on British shipping, will not be, at least, equivalent to the like duties levied in England on Prussian shipping. The United States did not content themselves with equivalency,—they went more boldly to work;—so might any European power. If equivalent duties be established on both sides, how will they operate? It is clear that the shipping of each country will stand in the same relative situation to that of the other, as if no such duties had been imposed; the duties, therefore, in both countries will be a tax, and a very objectionable one, upon the interchange of their respective productions. But, as those productions are different, these duties will affect differently the industry of the contending parties. Our principal exports to the North of Europe are manufactured goods and colonial produce;—our imports, timber, hemp, flax, pitch, tar (occasionally corn), and other raw materials. The former must be sold dearer in the foreign country,—the latter in this country,—by all the amount of the tax. What is this in the foreign country, but a premium against our manufactures, in favour of the rival manufactures of other states, or of the importing state itself;—and in this country, but a tax upon raw materials requisite for carrying on our own manufactures? A ship, for instance, is a manufactured article, and, to encourage our shipping, here is an additional tax upon the raw materials of that manufacture! Our cotton goods, our woollen stuffs, barely maintain a competition with

those of other countries, and here is an additional tax on their importation into those countries, to turn the scale against us! Our West-India planters complain of the low price of their productions, and we provoke an additional tax, which tends to shut them altogether out of the foreign market! If the end of this warfare should be, as, pushed to the extreme, it might be, that each country should export its own productions, in its own ships, and no country import the productions of another, in the ships of that other, which would be the greatest loser, the country manufacturing, or the country producing the raw materials?

I will not even glance at the effect of all this strife upon the consumers, that is, upon the bulk of the population; because I know that, in certain quarters, I shall be taxed with theory, if I stand up for the general interest of the community, against the pretensions of a particular class, when the interest of that class is supposed to be at stake. Indeed, I have no doubt I shall be told by some practical men, that all this is theory, to which they have a short answer. That answer is, "We do not want any thing from the Baltic. We have plenty of timber, &c. in Canada, all of which would be brought home in British Shipping; and, therefore, the powers of the Baltic must submit to our discriminating duties, without retaliation, or be content to lose our trade." I really know not how to reason with such logicians. I believe the Baltic can do to the full as well without us, as we can do without the Baltic. We import quite as much timber from Canada as can be used for the purposes for which that timber is fit. For other, and more important purposes, we want timber of better and more durable qualities.

Looking to the Shipping Interests of this country, and to the interests of Canada, I am not one of those who think we have done too much for those interests, in the great preference, in point of duty, which we have given to the Canada timber, and in the consequent sacrifices which we make to encourage the importation of that timber, inferior as it is; but I must say, at the same time, that the great annual increase of the importation from our North American possessions, under the present duty, shows that the proportion which it bears to the Baltic duty has not been settled to the disadvantage of the shipping employed in the Canada trade. Were it necessary, however, to make an option between a contest of discriminating duties with Prussia in the timber trade, or a further reduction of the duty on Canada timber, for the greater encouragement of our shipping, I certainly should prefer the latter measure, as the least injurious of the two to all the other interests of this country.

For the reasons which I have now stated, his Majesty's Government have thought it more prudent and more dignified to enter

into amicable arrangements with other powers, founded on the basis of mutual interest, and entire reciprocity of advantages, rather than embark in a contest of commercial hostility and reciprocal exclusion;—a system, at best, of doubtful benefit to the Shipping Interest;—involving the certainty of great injury to all the other important interests of the country; and which would, at last, place Parliament and the Government in the painful alternative, either of turning a deaf ear to the complaints of the many who would suffer from the contest,—or of terminating it, as other contests of a like nature have been terminated, by concession, bringing with it not only immediate humiliation, but other consequences which do not end with the concession itself.

But it is asserted, that we should not have been compelled to make our choice between these alternatives. Whilst I entreat the House to bear in mind the circumstances which I have already stated, in respect to the general feeling which prevails in the maritime countries of Europe, and in America, I must now call their attention to the steps which had been actually taken by Prussia (the first power, after the United States, with which we entered into a treaty upon this subject), before the negotiation of that treaty was entertained by his Majesty's Government.

I hold, Sir, in my hand a Report, made on the 6th of August 1822, by the British Consul at Dantzic, also Reports of the Vice-Consuls at Königsberg and Memel, to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I will not trouble the House with reading the whole of these despatches, but I request their particular attention to the following extracts:—

Extract of a Despatch from Mr. Consul Gibson, dated Dantzic, the 6th August 1822.

“My Lord:—I do myself the honour to transmit to your Lordship a translation of the Order of Cabinet (which I have only now been able to procure) respecting an increase of the Government Port Charges in the Prussian Ports, on vessels belonging to countries between which and Prussia no reciprocity has been fixed by treaty, or which do not otherwise treat Prussian ships and their cargoes as advantageously as their own. Prussia has made arrangements with Holland, Denmark, and America, for establishing a reciprocity in this respect, and the present regulation has evidently for object to induce other countries, *particularly Britain*, to enter into a similar arrangement.

“At present Prussian, Dutch, Danish and American ships pay, as public port charges here, about 46½ common groshes, or about 17½d. sterling, per last of 4,000 lb. (about 4,140 lb. English), or about 1½ tons British measurement; while British and other vessels pay about 77½ common groshes, or at 20½d. sterling per last, making 8½d. sterling per ton measurement

more. The advance that is to take place will make, as it will be payable in gold at a losing valuation, viz.

On ships coming in with a full cargo of goods, about.....	58	} Pence sterling per ton measurement
Do. with a quarter of a cargo or less.....	29	
Do. going out with a full cargo.....	29	
Do. with a quarter of a cargo or less.....	14½	

"Thus vessels arriving even in ballast, and taking a cargo back, will in future be burthened with about 37½d. sterling per ton measurement more government port charges than Prussian ships; which however is not quite so great an advantage to the latter as British vessels have over Prussian in Britain, by paying lower port charges, light money, &c. and less duty on the cargo, if of timber for instance, which gives the chief employment to Prussian ships.

"The Prussian government make this new port-charge regulation professedly from the interest created by the situation of their ship-owners, who are indeed all going to ruin."

Cabinet Order of the 20th June 1822, for the Encouragement of Home Shipping.

"In consideration of the unfavourable state of the shipping of this country for several years past, and in consequence of the representations made to me, founded on divers consultations, that the unfavourable state of things operates the more injuriously on the said trade, as the principles always observed here, of imposing moderate burthens on foreign ships frequenting Prussian ports, and of levying the same duties on goods imported or exported, whether in foreign or in native ships, are not adopted in several foreign ports frequented by Prussian ships; I have resolved, so long as these relations subsist, so detrimental to the maintenance of this important branch of domestic trade, to grant the said trade greater advantages than it has hitherto enjoyed; I therefore do ordain,

"*First.* That the coasting trade from one Prussian port to another shall be considered, exclusively, a branch of domestic trade, and shall be carried on solely by Prussian vessels, under pain of ship and property being confiscated, upon any foreign ship-master being detected in it. Exceptions can only be allowed in very urgent cases, and only for the public good, by the provincial authorities.

"*Secondly.* An increase of the hitherto existing harbour dues shall take place in all Prussian ports, on foreign ships with cargoes, incoming or outgoing; but the same shall not be applicable to the ships of those nations:—

"*a.* With which Prussia has treaties, placing her ships and their cargoes on an equal footing with the native ships, or with those of the most favoured nations, in conformity with the stipulations therein made.

"*b.* Which from other causes treat Prussian ships, with their cargoes, the same as native vessels with theirs.

"With this restriction shall the increase take place, according to the following rates:—

"a. On in-coming ships.... R. 2 per last of 4,000 lbs

"b. On out-going ditto..... 1 ditto.

"c. On ships that have only one-fourth of a cargo, or less, one-half of the above; say,

"In-coming 1 — out-going $\frac{1}{2}$.

"Ships in ballast are not subject to the increased imposts.

"The proceeds of this impost shall not be considered as an additional source of revenue to the state; but shall be applied for the benefit of the ship-owners, accordingly as you, the Minister of Commerce, shall propose to me.

"*Thirdly.* In order to present, as far as is in the power of the state, a real source of profit to the ship-owners, the conveyance of such goods as may be for account of the government, shall be effected, in preference, by native ships, regarding which I refer to my particular order of this day.

"The first and third of the foregoing enactments shall be put in force immediately; but the second point only in three months after publication of this order, which is to be made through the collection of laws, and according to which the needful is to be decreed.

(Signed)

"FREDERICK WILHELM."

*Extract of a Despatch from Vice-Consul Tuke, dated Königsberg,
22d August 1822.*

"Sir:—I beg leave to draw the attention of your Excellency to several new laws and regulations of the Prussian government, which are highly detrimental to the British trade, and respecting which numerous complaints have been made to me by the merchants and ship-masters interested in the trade between this country and Great Britain.

"By the last tariff, a duty of one guilder per hundred-weight is imposed on all flax, hemp, and tow, shipped in foreign vessels. This is probably intended as a measure of retaliation for the difference of import duty charged in Great Britain between goods arriving in British and foreign vessels. This law has obliged several British ships this summer to load flax at the low rate of thirty shillings per ton, instead of fifty shillings, which they would have got, had not the merchants been obliged to pay twenty florins per ton export duty, because the goods were shipped in a British vessel. As hemp and flax are, now that the corn trade no longer exists, the principal articles of export from hence, this duty bears exceedingly hard on British vessels.

"According to a Cabinet Order, dated Berlin, 20th June 1822, intended for the encouragement of Prussian shipping, the king has been pleased to direct a duty of three dollars per last to be charged on all foreign vessels arriving with cargoes after the expiration of three months. This tax is so important in its consequences as to demand immediate attention, for a moderate sized vessel will, by this order, be compelled to pay three hundred dollars

in addition to the existing heavy charges, which will entirely prevent our vessels from enjoying the carrying trade from home to this country."

*Extract of a Despatch from Vice-Consul Fowler, dated Memel,
21st August 1822.*

"This difference between British and Prussian shipping" (i. e. the difference established by the Decree of 20th of June), "must drive the carrying trade in British bottoms from this port, to the great injury of the British shipping interest; for about three hundred British vessels, on an average, load here annually with timber for Great Britain, which of course cannot bear such heavy charges as cargoes consisting of grain, flax, hemp, tallow, &c. &c., and which are of so much more considerable value. The merchants here, who are principally British, have protested against this new regulation, and petitioned the Prussian government for the repeal thereof."

From what I have now read, the House will at once understand the nature of the measures adopted by the Prussian Government, in the year 1822, and the motives which influenced them in that proceeding. What was the consequence of these measures? Why, that, in the next year, 1823, the Board of Trade, and other departments of the government, were assailed with representations from all quarters, connected with the shipping and trade of the country, against the heavy charges imposed upon British ships in the ports of Prussia. In such circumstances, what course did his Majesty's Government take? We felt it to be our duty, in the first instance, to communicate with the Prussian minister in this country: and our minister at Berlin was, I believe, also directed to confer with the Prussian Government on the subject. I myself had a conference with the Prussian minister at this court, and I well recollect the substance of his reply to me; "You have," he said, "set us the example, by your port and light charges, and your discriminating duties on Prussian ships; and we have not gone beyond the limits of that example. Hitherto, we have confined the increase of our port and tonnage charges to ships only; but it is the intention of my Government next year" (and of this he showed me the written proof), "to imitate you still more closely, by imposing discriminating duties on the goods imported in your ships. Our object is a just protection to our own navigation; and so long as the measure of our protection does not exceed that which is afforded in your ports to British ships, we cannot see with what reason you can complain."

Against such a reply, what remonstrance could we, in fairness, make to the Prussian Government? We might have addressed ourselves, it may be said by some, to the friendly feelings of that government;—we might have pleaded long usage in support of our discriminating duties;—we might have urged the advantages

which Prussia derived from her trade with England. Appeals like these were not forgotten in the discussion, but they were of little avail against the fact stated by Mr. Consul Gibson—that “the Prussian ship-owners were all going to ruin.”

By others it may be said, “your duty was to retaliate, by increasing your own port charges, and discriminating duties, on Prussian shipping.” I have already stated generally my reasons against the policy of this latter course. We were not prepared to begin a system of commercial hostility, which, if followed up on both sides to its legitimate consequences, could only tend to reciprocal prohibition. In this state of things, more prudently, as I contend, we entered upon an amicable negotiation with the Prussian Government, upon the principle of our treaty with the United States,—that of abolishing, on both sides, all discriminating duties on the ships and goods of the respective countries in the ports of the other.

Having concluded an arrangement with Prussia upon this basis, we soon found it necessary to do the same with some other of the Northern States. Similar conventions were accordingly entered into with Denmark and Sweden. Reciprocity is the foundation of all those conventions; but it is only fair to add, that they contain other stipulations for giving facility to trade, and from which the commerce of this country, I am confident, will, in the result, derive considerable advantage.

When his Majesty's Government had successively made the concession of these discriminating duties to the United States, to Prussia, to Denmark, and to Sweden, I should have been ashamed of the Councils of this country, if we had hesitated to enter into a similar agreement with the free Hanseatic towns of Hamburgh, Bremen, and Lubeck. These little States, I admit, had imposed no discriminating duties upon our ships, though they had the power to do so. But would it have been worthy of the character of this great country, consistent with its justice, or honourable to its generosity, to continue to levy, upon the trade and shipping of these ports, duties which were no longer paid by the subjects of more powerful States;—to have made their forbearance the plea for our exaction, or to have waited to do an act of justice until they had deprived us of that plea?

In our treatment of these free towns, this country ought not altogether to forget that, amidst the barbarous ignorance, and habitual violence, of the feudal ages, those little Republics were the refuge of commerce, and the nurseries of civilization. They were the sanctuaries, in which the arts and pursuits, most conducive to the enjoyments and improvement of mankind, were protected, amidst the scenes of bloodshed, rapine, and insecurity, which they were too often surrounded. With these recollections

tions, I shall, perhaps, be excused if I express my regret, that several of the little trading communities on the Continent have ceased to be free and independent. In point of policy, it has always appeared to me that the incorporation of these communities with the military monarchies of the Continent, was not the most satisfactory part of the late settlement of Europe. This incorporation was, probably, more the inevitable consequence of the general derangement of the war, than the legitimate result of the principles which prevailed at the restoration of peace. Were I disposed to illustrate the inconvenience of that incorporation, in reference to the present subject, I might, not inopportunistly, refer to Dantzic. If, instead of passing under the dominion of an absolute monarchy, that town (formerly, I believe, one of the Hanseatic League) had continued free like Hamburg, and had the Government of Prussia then said,—“You shall not trade with us, except on such and such conditions,”—our answer might have been, “the commodities which we want from your country we can procure at Dantzic, where no such conditions are imposed on British ships.”

If we look at the present question as connected with our maritime strength, I contend that there can be little or no danger from the arrangements which I have now described. The states to which those arrangements extend, from their situation, and from many other circumstances, which it is not necessary for me to mention, never can become formidable as maritime powers;—they never can dispute with us the ascendancy on the ocean, nor have they an interest in assisting others to obtain that ascendancy. Their commercial interests, and regard to their own security, must alike incline them to our side.

In time of peace, it is well known, the policy of this country excludes, as much as possible, from our commercial marine the natives of all foreign countries; but, in time of war, when our native seamen are required for the King's service, we are under the necessity of admitting volunteers from other countries to man our merchant-ships. The consequence is that, from our multiplied intercourse with those secondary states, their seamen, in time of war, tempted by higher wages and other advantages, assist in manning our merchant-ships, and thereby afford us great facilities for carrying on our extensive commerce. On the restoration of peace, these volunteers are, most of them, forced to seek employment again in the merchantmen of their own countries; and their return thither contributes to give increased activity to the commercial marine of those countries.

If, therefore, by this system of extended reciprocity, a somewhat larger share of the carrying trade between Great Britain and these secondary states devolve to their shipping, in time of

peace, so far as this participation is obtained at the expense of any diminished employment for our own shipping, we may regret the diminution: at the same time, if the circumstances which lead to it be unavoidable, it is some consolation to know, that the corresponding increase, elsewhere, is divided among those countries which cannot be dangerous, and are likely to be most useful to us, in time of war.

The Timber trade with Norway has, at all times, been carried on chiefly in the ships of that country. They are built for the purpose, in the cheapest manner, but so rudely constructed, as to be unfit for the conveyance of almost any other article. In respect to the Prussian timber ships, they are also of a construction very inferior to the shipping of this country, built for the purpose of general trade. We are told by most of the Petitioners, and figures are adduced to prove the statements, that they are sent to sea and navigated at less than one-half of the expense of British ships. If it be so, the restoration of the discriminating duty, to the repeal of which these Petitioners attribute all their present difficulties, would be of little avail to protect them. That protection was 2s. 9d. upon a load of timber, being the difference between 57s. 9d., the duty in a foreign, and 55s., the duty in a British ship, exclusive of some difference on account of lower port charges, and light money, paid by the British ship. Against this advantage, therefore, in our ports was to be set off the alien duty of 3s. 1½d. a ton, imposed on British ships in the Prussian ports, whether with a cargo or in ballast. The balance, therefore, on our side would be next to nothing,—totally inadequate, upon the showing of the petitioners, as protection;—but just enough to excite irritation, and to afford a pretence for vexatious restrictions on British commerce, and on the introduction of British manufactures into the Prussian dominions. It has also been stated by some of the petitioners, that ship-building in this country is rendered more expensive by taxes on the materials, from which other countries are exempt. I am not aware that, in the petition from the Shipping Interest in the port of London, praying for a continuance of the discriminating duties, the Petitioners urge the direct taxation upon the materials employed in ship-building, as a ground of complaint. It has been alleged, that the Americans build their ships upon cheaper terms than we do. This I do not believe. Timber, I admit, is cheaper in the United States, but almost every other article employed in ship-building is as dear as, and several of them dearer than, in this country.

—hour likewise is dearer, and the pay of the crew full as high as, t higher than, in England.

ter all, there is nothing new in the complaints now made of increased employment of the Shipping of the Northern powers,

in their trade with this country. Similar complaints were made after the American war. In the year 1786, the ship-owners represented that our laws gave too great an advantage to foreign ships, and especially to the foreign ships employed in the importation of timber from the Baltic.

In consequence of this representation, the Board of Trade of that day entered upon an inquiry into the subject. Mr. Reeves, in his work on the Law of Shipping and Navigation, states, in reference to this inquiry, that—

“ In the year 1786, it was observed, that the quantity of foreign ships employed in the importation of goods from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the East country, was much greater in proportion to the British, than the foreign tonnage employed in other trades; and that it was increasing in general, and the British shipping employed in some of these trades was, at the same time, decreasing. A reference was made, in consequence, to the Board of Customs, to see whether it might not be proper to augment the duty, called the Alien's Duty, or petty custom, on such of the goods enumerated and described in the eighth and ninth sections of the Act of Navigation as were then subject to it, and were imported from the before-mentioned countries; and whether such increase would materially operate to increase the burthens on, and consequently the prices of, those articles, if such duty were increased gradually; that is, by making it double from the first of January, 1787, and treble from the first of January, 1788: and in case the Board of Customs should be of such opinion, then they were called upon to consider, whether some advantage might not be given to British-built ships employed in those trades, by lowering the duties on those articles when imported in such ships; or whether both these methods might not be pursued in such proportions as might best attain the end proposed, and not materially affect the revenue.

As it does not appear that recourse was had to these expedients, it is to be inferred that, upon further consideration, it was found that it would not be safe to risk the experiment. The Northern Powers had not then complained of our existing alien charges upon their shipping; they had taken no steps to countervail those charges in their ports; but did it follow that they would continue passive, if a question then at rest had been disturbed, by increasing those charges in the manner suggested? In my opinion, to leave the question at rest, as long as possible, was the wisest policy for this country. It was the policy pursued until the matter was taken up, not by us, but by the United States of America, and in succession by other powers. In that state of things, and after the arrangements which we had entered into with those powers, acting upon the necessity of the case, I felt,

in the course of the last session, that it would be better to make our laws upon this point square with our practice;—better, as one general rule,—first, to tender to all nations alike, and indiscriminately, equal facilities of commerce and navigation, and equal inducements to visit the ports of this country with their merchandize, either for our own consumption, or in the way of transit (*entrepôt*) to other parts of the world:—secondly, to abolish all discriminating duties affecting differently the like productions of foreign countries, and, in lieu thereof, to establish one uniform tariff for the whole:—and, thirdly, to reduce that tariff to the lowest degree, consistent in each particular article with the two legitimate objects of all duties,—either the collection of the necessary public revenue, or the protection requisite for the maintenance of our own internal industry. These are the principles according to which our new Book of Rates has been formed, and the consolidation of our innumerable and, in many instances, inconsistent and contradictory Laws of Customs been affected.

A few observations on our Commercial Policy, with regard to our Colonies abroad, will bring me, I hope, to the conclusion of this important investigation. The former colonial system of this country was simply this, that our possessions abroad should receive all their supplies from hence in British shipping, and they were prohibited from trading directly with any other country. But so early as the year 1783,—the year in which we recognized the independence of the United States of America, it occurred to the Government at home, that it might be somewhat hard to require of the West-India Colonies to draw all their supplies from the mother country. What, then, was the line adopted? Orders in Council allowing those colonies to trade directly with the United States of America in British Shipping, were passed, from time to time, as occasion required, and the Ministers, as often, came down to Parliament for Bills of Indemnity, for having so far violated the plantation laws.

In process of time, however, the Government of the United States, jealous of a trade in which British Shipping alone was employed, said to this country,—“If you want the productions of our country for the use of your colonies, and will not allow us to send them in our ships, we will entirely prohibit the exportation to your colonies in British Shipping, of those articles of which your colonies stand in need.” They did so. The British Government had then recourse to another expedient, in order to avert the threatened inconvenience, and at the same time to avoid any sensitive alteration of our Navigation Laws. A sort of open mart fair was established at some half-way place between the coast America and the West Indies, to which the ships of the United

States came, and where, being met by our traders, the respective parties interchanged commodities, according to their mutual wants.

But the Government of the United States again interfered, and prohibited their ships from this trade. After a suspension of intercourse had continued for some time, Parliament, in the year 1822, passed an Act, by which American ships were allowed to trade directly between the United States and our colonies in the West-Indies and North America.

Now, let me ask, was it politic, was it altogether consistent with impartiality and our friendly relations with the North of Europe, to grant to the shipping of the United States, first, in the trade between them and this country, by the treaty of 1815; and, secondly in the trade, by this Act regularly legalized, between those states and our colonies, privileges which we continued to deny to the shipping of Prussia, of Denmark, of Sweden, of Hamburg, and of other trading communities of Europe? Upon what principle of fairness, upon what principle of sound policy, were we to continue this preference exclusively to a power, towards which, God knows, I entertain no feeling of hostility,—far from it;—but when I am speaking of that nation in a British House of Commons, it is not improper to say, that in matters of navigation and naval power, there exists towards us a spirit of rivalry in the United States;—a spirit of which I do not complain, but which should incline every Englishman to doubt the wisdom of any measure, tending to encourage the growth of the commercial marine of America, by giving to it privileges greater than are permitted to the shipping of other states:—states less jealous of our maritime ascendancy in time of war, and, at all times, confining their views upon the ocean to the industrious employment of their sea-faring people, without looking to the ulterior object of, one day, disputing with us the dominion of that ocean.

Considering therefore, the Act of 1822, and the changes which had taken place in the Colonial System of other Powers, it appeared to me, that the time was arrived when, upon every sound principle, it would be right to extend to the foreign shipping of Europe, the same privilege of trading with our colonies in the New World, which had been granted to the shipping of America; and also to give a greater facility and extension to the intercourse between foreign countries and our colonies generally;—strictly confining, however, to British shipping only all trade between this country and the colonies, and all inter-colonial trade between the different foreign possessions of the British empire.

Whether we look to the interests of our commerce, which are also the interests of our navigation;—whether we look to the separate interests of the colonies, or to the general interests of the parent country;—or whether we consider the changes which have recently taken place, especially in the New World;—all these considerations appear to me to concur in support of the measures to which I have referred, and the enlarged views of policy upon which they are founded.

Shipping, like other branches of business in this country, is liable to fluctuation. There may be great excitement at one period, and great depression at another. Last year, for instance, the demand far exceeded the means of the British ship-owners to supply it. The price of freight for foreign adventures was, in consequence, so much raised as to become a very serious injury and interruption to other branches of navigation, especially to our Coasting trade. Yet, such was the unbridled rage for speculation which then prevailed, that our tonnage could not keep pace with it, and foreign vessels were taken up in every port of Europe, not from a preference, but because British ships could not be procured. This is not the proper occasion to inquire into the origin of the almost universal mania which appears to have seized upon merchants and manufacturers, not of this country only, but, more or less, upon those of other countries, during the last year. It is now too generally seen and admitted, even by those who were most infected by that mania, that their speculations were carried on without reference to the habitual scale of our consumption, or to the rapid accumulation of goods, or to any of those circumstances which, in their calmer moments, direct the operations of commercial men. When prices had risen, in the first instance, from natural causes perhaps, speculation soon forced a further and more rapid rise, and the only inference, for a time, among buyers, seems to have been, that it would continue progressive, and almost indefinite.

Connecting this rage for speculation with the employment of Shipping, the House will be surprised to hear in what a degree the quantity of bulky articles from foreign countries and from our possessions in North America, in the last year, exceeded the importations of former years. In the year 1822, the total importation of timber from foreign countries was 140,715 loads—in 1825, it amounted to not less than 301,548.

	1822.	1826.
Of flax	cwts. 607,143	- - 1,042,956
Of tallow	do. 805,238	- - 1,164,029
Of wool	lbs. 19,048,879	- - 43,700,553
Of linseed	bush. 1,411,187	- - 2,876,571

From British America.

	1822.	1825.
Of timber - - - - -	loads, 345,741 - -	467,565
Ashes - - - - -	cwts. 135,983 - -	210,781

Masts from all Parts of the World.

Under twelve inches in diameter,	No. 14,484 - -	19,016
Above - - do. - - - -	loads, 4,577 - -	8,698*

The result of all this overtrading of last year, of which I have selected only a few instances, is the depression which now prevails, the interruption of commercial credit, the great diminution of employment for manufacturing labour in this country, and the general derangement of business in the countries with which our principal interchange of commodities is carried on. I deplore this state of things, not the less, certainly, because it is not confined to this country: and in alluding to the sufferings of others, I do so, not as a source of consolation to ourselves, but as evidence, that this derangement is to be traced to some cause of more extensive effect than the municipal regulations of this country.

It would be matter of surprise if, amidst this almost universal stagnation of demand, the Shipping interest, which had fully participated in the extraordinary activity of the preceding period, should not partake of the languor by which it is now succeeded. In looking dispassionately at this or any other of the leading interests of this country, we must not draw our conclusions from extreme cases either way. We must also recollect that shipping, in common with every other mode of employing capital and industry, when it seeks a foreign market, is liable to be affected by a competition with other countries, and by acts of foreign states, over which we can have no control. As far as exclusion is within our reach,—in the coasting trade,—in the fisheries,—in the trade between this country and our foreign possessions, we grant a strict monopoly to the British ship-owner. It is our duty to maintain and enforce that monopoly, not for his special advantage, but for the public interest. It is further our duty to give him every legitimate countenance and protection in the trade of this country with other maritime countries; but if any branch of that trade is interfered with, either by new regulations in those countries, or by the erection of territories, once colonies, into an independent state, however we may regret the circumstances, as affecting our ancient navigation system, it may not be in our power to overrule those circumstances.

In such a state of things, our policy must be, retaining the important principles of that system as much as possible, to adapt it

* Parl. Papers, Session 1826, v. xxii. n. 374.

to the change in our situation, and to the altered relation in which we stand to the parties with which we have to deal.

The first effect of such inevitable changes, either in navigation or trade, is, usually, more or less, to derange the interests upon which they immediately bear: but the temporary difficulty is generally overcome by the speedy opening of fresh channels of employment, and is soon merged in the increased enterprise which attracts capital and shipping to some other quarter. This was the case after the separation of the British Colonies in North America; and I hope for a similar issue on the present occasion.

We are all agreed that our Commercial Marine is the foundation of our naval power, and that the maintenance of that power is the paramount duty of those who administer the affairs of this country. In an enquiry like this, therefore, the most important question for the consideration of the House is, not the detail of each separate branch of trade in which our commercial marine was employed in any particular year, but its aggregate amount at this time, compared with the aggregate amount at some antecedent period.

Now, Sir, I have already stated what that amount was at the breaking out of the last war in 1793, and what it is at the present time. The comparison, taken by itself, certainly affords no ground for despondency or alarm. But, in making this comparison, in reference to our military marine, we are also to bear in mind, that in 1793, both the military and commercial marine of France and Spain were much more numerous than they are at present. The navy of Spain, once so powerful, has dwindled almost to nothing; her merchant-ships have nearly disappeared from the ocean. The navy of France is less numerous and less formidable than it was at the breaking out of the revolution, and her commercial shipping, though reviving since the peace, is probably, at this moment, not more than one-half of its amount in 1792. On the other hand, whether we look to the number of ships of war, to the means of manning those ships, to the general spirit which pervades every branch of the service, or to any other element of naval power, what a contrast between our situation at the close of the last and of the American war! Can we forget the period when the combined fleet of the House of Bourbon was master of the British Channel,—when a West-India Convoy was obliged to assemble at Leith, and go north about, in order to escape capture by an enemy's fleet, within sight of our principal sea-ports? Can we forget when Gibraltar, blockaded by the united naval forces of those same powers, was relieved, as it were, by stealth?—when it was considered matter of just praise to the highly-distinguished officer who commanded the British fleet on that trying occasion, that in performing this service, he was able to elude the vigilance of a

superior enemy, and to return to England, without having risked a combat?

These are among the recollections which belong to the American war. How different from those which connect themselves with the war by which it was succeeded! That our sway on every part of the ocean was undisputed by the naval power not of France and Spain only, but of all Europe, before the close of the last war, is matter of notoriety. In fact, the British navy was then occupied in the blockade of every naval arsenal of its enemies; and this, for the last years of the war, formed its principal employment in Europe.

When we began that war, in the course of which we achieved so many victories, our commercial marine was three-fifths of its present amount. Our seamen in the King's navy, 16,000, instead of 30,000, their present number. We had then no reserve of veteran seamen, receiving for former services an annual allowance from the State. We have now such a reserve, amounting to many thousands, all of whom are liable, upon an emergency, to be called upon by the Admiralty, and of whom a large proportion would, I have no doubt, be found as efficient as before their discharge. Our ships, likewise, are in a more complete state, and better prepared with all the means of speedy equipment, than at any former period of peace. Never, I will venture to affirm, was there a time when the country might rest with greater confidence and satisfaction on the sufficiency of its naval resources than at the present. But we are told, and I am ready to admit it, that if the naval resources, of France and Spain have declined, a new and formidable power has grown up in the United States of America. I have already stated, that the maritime means of that country had, from peculiar circumstances, been considerably benefited during the late war, which lasted so long, and spread so generally through Europe. But, if the commercial marine of the United States increased during that period, our own advanced in a greater amount. Since the restoration of a general peace, the Shipping of both countries has rather decreased. The diminution in that of the United States has been stated at 168,000 tons, which I believe to be fully equal to any diminution that has occurred in this country. I am warranted, therefore, in concluding that, upon a comparison of our commercial marine with the commercial marine of other powers, we have no reason to apprehend any of the difficulties now which the Petitioners predict, and that our naval means are fully adequate to any possible emergency which may compel us to call them into exertion.

If, Sir, I have trespassed too long upon the time of the House, my apology, I trust, will be found in the vital importance of the subject. The severe distress, under which the country now la-

hours, is attributed, in some quarters, to the changes which have recently taken place in our Navigation System, and in our Commercial Policy. If any honourable members entertain that opinion, all that I ask of them is to come forward, and point out distinctly to the House the specific changes to which they ascribe these consequences. It is for them to show, if they can, by evidence, or by argument, the connexion of cause and effect between those changes and the difficulties in which the country is now, unhappily, involved. Let them give a notice, and appoint a day for that purpose. This would be the manly course to pursue,—it was the course taken by the honourable member for Coventry,* on the question of the Trade in Foreign Silks. For having taken this course I return him my sincere acknowledgments. To follow his example is the only favour I ask of those who heap abuse upon the measures in question, or who excite clamour out of doors, against the individual, upon whom has been devolved the task, however imperfectly executed, of submitting those measures, on the part of his Majesty's Government, for the approbation and sanction of parliament.

The right honourable gentleman concluded by moving for copies of the several Accounts and Returns to which he had referred in the course of his speech.

Mr. Baring said, there was hardly a single point in the elaborate detail of the right honourable the President of the Board of Trade, in which he did not concur; and he rose, not so much with the intention of following the right honourable gentleman's remarks, as with that of thanking him for the able manner in which he had developed his views, and for the general System which he proposed to adopt, with respect to our Domestic and Foreign Shipping. Mr. Hume repelled the outcry which had been raised against the principles on which the right honourable gentleman had been recently acting. Nothing, he said, could be more unjust than such an outcry: the evils under which the Shipping Interest now laboured, were not to be attributed to the change of system which the right honourable gentleman had introduced, but to the weight of taxation under which the country was labouring. Mr. Charles Grant said, that the great object which his right honourable friend wished to accomplish by his Statement of that night, was to prove to the nation, that the complaints made against him out of doors were utterly unfounded, and that the measures which he had introduced had not had any effect in diminishing the Commercial Marine of the country, but, on the contrary, had considerably increased it. The motion was agreed to.

* Mr. Ellice.

JOINT-STOCK COMPANIES FORMED DURING THE YEARS 1824, 1825, AND 1826.

DECEMBER 5th, 1826.

THIS day, Mr. Alderman Waithman called the attention of the House to the Joint-Stock Companies which had been formed during the last three years. They amounted, he said, in number, to no fewer than six hundred, and required, for the execution of their intended operations, a capital of many millions. He complained of the dishonest views with which they were originally set on foot; the knavery by which a fictitious value was, for a time, given to shares which had cost nothing, that the solid differences between imaginary prices might fill the pockets of the gambling speculators; and of the misery and ruin produced by this systematic swindling. In particular, he instanced the conduct of the Directors of the Arigna Mining Company, and concluded with moving "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the origin, management, and present state of the Joint-Stock Companies, which had been formed during the years 1824, 1825, and 1826, and to report the same, with any special matter touching the conduct of any member of that House." Mr. Canning objected to the extent of the inquiry, which, he said, to be useful, must be limited and precise: but, as enough had passed to afford strong grounds for suspicion, that in the affairs of the Arigna Company there was matter deserving of inquiry, he would move an amendment, limiting the labours of the Committee to the management and history of that Company. Mr. Attwood entered into an able defence of Joint-Stock Companies, against the wholesale accusation brought against them by the honourable alderman. There was, he said, no more harm in buying or selling a share, than there was in purchasing or selling a shawl. For himself, he could safely say, that he was not aware of having ever been engaged in a single Company, which could be deemed derogatory to his station as a member of parliament. Were they, he asked, to infer bad conduct, because of the connection of a member with some of these Companies? If so, then even the right honourable the President of the Board of Trade was not safe; for, so far back as the year 1822, he had been connected with one of them; but nobody doubted, that it was because he thought such Companies advantageous to the Public, and because there were men amongst them of sound character and strict integrity.

Mr. HUSKISSON said, that as an allusion had been made to him, it became his turn to explain what had been his conduct, during the prevalence of the occurrences which had been so much

alluded to. The honourable member for Callington* was, however, under some mistake, or misapprehension, when he insinuated that he had had the least connection with any of these speculations. He could assure him, that neither directly nor indirectly, had he had the least share, or interest, in any Company which had been formed in the years 1824, 1825, 1826. He had, indeed, an interest in one of the oldest Insurance Companies of the country, but it had remained of the same amount during the last twenty years. It was not, however, because he held a particular situation under the Government, that he felt himself disqualified from applying his private property to such beneficial purposes as fairly presented themselves to his view; but the fact was, that he had never thought of embarking in these speculations, and, with the exception of some inconsiderable shares in two canals, one of them near his country residence, and the other locally connected with his interests in another point of view, he had never been in any way engaged in these Companies.

If the honourable member alluded to the Company which had been formed to promote the growth of silk in Ireland, he would explain, in a few words, all the connection he had had with that Company. When the parties who had projected it came to the Board of Trade, he had specifically stated to them, that though he thought it a desirable experiment, and wished it to have a fair trial, and though, under other circumstances, he might have felt disposed to take an interest in it, yet, considering the situation he held, as President of the Board of Trade, he could not expose himself to the misapprehension that would be likely to arise from his so doing. When the parties applied to him, to know what number of shares would be taken, he informed them, that there must have been some misconception as to the intentions of the Government, which was desirous only of giving that degree of countenance to the experiment, which might facilitate the object of providing employment to a large portion of the population of Ireland. Such was the nature of this application, and such the answer which had been given on the part of the Government; and he defied the honourable gentleman to point out a single speculation, of any description, with which he had the slightest connection, either directly or indirectly.

He had heard with great satisfaction the very sound and able vindication which the honourable member for Callington had been enabled, from his personal knowledge and individual information, to give of the benefit and utility of Joint-Stock Companies. It was extremely desirable that some explanation should go forth to the public, which might counteract the unmeasured condemnation

* Mr. Attwood.

which the honourable alderman had thought proper to pronounce upon these Companies. If there was one circumstance to which, more than another, this country owed its wealth and its commercial advantages, it was the existence of Joint-Stock Companies. Its canals, its bridges, all its great works, had been carried on by Joint-Stock Companies; and it was an advantage peculiar to this country, that such important undertakings were conducted by individuals interested in their success: whereas, in other countries, where they were left to the care of the Government, they were often neglected and left unfinished. Many of these works had been extremely disadvantageous to the persons who had originally embarked in them. This had been the case with regard to the New River Company. It must be admitted, that there could hardly be a greater benefit to a populous city than an abundant supply of pure and wholesome water. The individuals, however, by whom this project was originally undertaken, were involved in great loss; but, ultimately, the Public had derived the greatest benefit from it, and the successors of the first projectors had been amply remunerated. The same thing had happened with respect to many of our Bridges and Harbours: and, in general, it might be observed, that it was one of the circumstances which distinguished this country above all others, that great and important works were conducted by Joint-Stock Companies—not always to the interest of the parties who embarked in such speculations, but uniformly to the interest and advantage of the Public. There could not, therefore, be a greater error, or a greater delusion, than that under which it had been attempted to cry down Joint-Stock Companies as public evils. It was only in the last session, that efforts had been made to prevail on the Bank of England, so far to relax its charter, as to admit of the formation of Joint-Stock Companies, with a view of rendering the business of Banking less hazardous; and the example of Scotland was cited, where there was no impediment to the formation of such Companies.

The honourable alderman had talked as if the formation of Joint-Stock Companies, for the purpose of carrying on the business of Mining, was a new discovery. He could, however, tell the honourable alderman, that all the great mining works in this country had been carried on, time out of mind, by Joint-Stock Companies. The mines in Cornwall and in Wales had been conducted by such Companies. No man could regret more than he did, that the law relating to Joint-Stock Companies was not more satisfactory; for while its object should be to control the excesses to which such Companies were liable, it should also afford proper encouragement to those by whom undertakings of public utility were first designed. It was, therefore, mischievous and

impolitic to pass a sweeping censure on Joint-Stock Companies generally, and it was no less unfair and unwise to take away the characters of those persons who might happen to be concerned in them. He would not dispute that there had been many Bubbles, as they were called, which reflected deep disgrace upon those by whom they had been concocted; but he must repeat, that many of the projects which had been formed were likely to conduce, in a large degree, to the public interest. The mischievous effects of some of the late schemes and bubbles were but too visible in the ruin and destruction of many: and those individuals on whom guilt could fairly be fastened, deserved that disgrace which their proceedings called for. Whenever the subject of those shameless speculators should be brought under the consideration of the House, he would raise, as he always had raised, his voice against them, as schemes fraught with fraud in some instances, and with hazard and obvious folly, in others. The honourable alderman had particularly alluded to the Brick Company, and to the Milk Company, and some others of a like description. Of these, and similar wild schemes, he had already expressed his opinion in that House; and he had warned the public against connecting themselves with schemes which had evidently no other foundation than the folly or avarice of the projectors. He wished sincerely that the law was so constituted as to prevent parties from engaging in such delusions, and he was quite ready to agree with the honourable alderman, that when frauds and abuses, either in Companies or individuals, could be proved, they ought to be punished; but while he thus far concurred with the honourable alderman, he could not join in the clamour against a principle, which was one of the great foundations of our commercial prosperity, and which he considered essential to the best interests of the country.

The amendment was agreed to, and a Committee appointed.

BATTLE OF NAVARIN.

FEBRUARY 12th, 1828.*

MR. HOBHOUSE moved, "That the thanks of the House be given to Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Codrington, Commander-in-Chief of his Majesty's Ships and Vessels in the Mediterranean, for his able and gallant conduct in the successful and decisive Action with the Turkish Fleet in the Bay of Navarin, on the 20th of October last." After the motion had been opposed by Mr. Banks,

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON rose. He began by declaring himself disappointed with the speech of the honourable member who

* The following is a list of the Duke of Wellington's administration.

Cabinet Ministers.

Earl Bathurst	- - - - -	Lord President of the Council.
Lord Lyndhurst	- - - - -	Lord Chancellor.
Lord Ellenborough	- - - - -	Lord Privy Seal.
The Duke of Wellington	- - - - -	First Lord of the Treasury.
Right Hon. Henry Goulburn	- - - - -	Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Right Hon. Robert Peel	- - - - -	{ Secretary of State for the Home Department.
Earl of Dudley	- - - - -	Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
Right Hon. William Huskisson	- - - - -	{ Secretary of State for the Department of War and the Colonies.
Viscount Melville	- - - - -	President of the Board of Control.
Earl of Aberdeen	- - - - -	Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.
Right Hon. Charles Grant	- - - - -	{ Treasurer of the Navy, and President of the Board of Trade.
Viscount Palmerston	- - - - -	Secretary at War.
Right Hon. J. C. Herries	- - - - -	Master of the Mint.

Not of the Cabinet.

H. R. H. the Duke of Clarence	- - - - -	Lord High Admiral.
Viscount Beresford	- - - - -	Master-General of the Ordnance.
Right Hon. Charles Arbuthnot	- - - - -	{ First Commissioner of Woods and Forests.
J. Planta, Esq.	- - - - -	{ Secretaries of the Treasury.
G. R. Dawson, Esq.	- - - - -	{

spoke last. He was at all times unwilling to address the House unnecessarily, and he had therefore fondly anticipated that the result of the honourable member's speech would be the giving of a conclusive argument against the motion, and would thereby render it unnecessary for him to trespass on their patience. But he was sorry to say that he had not heard from the honourable member one word which appeared to him to bear upon the question before the House. The honourable member had been pleased, in a manner which was not, he thought, altogether consistent with the usual courtesy of parliamentary proceedings, to enter into a discussion upon the merits of our intercourse with France and Russia, and the different steps taken at various periods with a view to the pacification of Greece. Now, he really thought that, after the House had been told by the Ministers of the Crown the reasons which precluded them—very reluctantly—from giving to the House the information which could alone enable Parliament to come to a just conclusion on the subject, it would have been more fair and consistent to have adhered to the line very properly chalked out by the honourable member for Westminster—to have waived the consideration of the policy of the treaty, and to have confined his attention strictly to the motion which, he could not avoid saying, had been so indiscreetly brought before them.

His honourable friend had said, that the object of the treaty, as he read it, was totally different from that of the protocol which was signed at St. Petersburg in April, 1826. Now he utterly denied that position. It was necessary to look both to the treaty and to the protocol for the objects of the parties to them, and the motives which influenced the proceedings they had adopted. In both documents the objects which the contracting parties professed to have in view, and which they pledged themselves to effect, were the reconciliation of the Porte with Greece, and the pacification of the Levant. These were the objects which were

Right Hon. W. Vesey Fitz Gerald	-	Paymaster of the Forces.
Duke of Manchester	- - - - -	Postmaster-General.
Right Hon. T. Frankland Lewis	-	Vice President of the Board of Trade.
Right Hon. Sir John Leach	- - -	Master of the Rolls.
Right Hon. Launcelet Shadwell	-	Vice-Chancellor.
Sir Charles Wetherell.	- - - -	Attorney-General.
Sir N. C. Tindal	- - - - -	Solicitor-General.

Ministry of Ireland.

Marquis of Anglesey	- - - - -	Lord Lieutenant.
Anthony Hart	- - - - -	Lord Chancellor.
John W. Lamb	- - - - -	Chief Secretary.

brought prominently forward. His honourable friend had talked of fraud, conspiracy, trick, and violence; but he certainly could not have read the treaty of the 6th of July attentively, if he had not found that it was framed with the view of re-establishing peace between the contending parties, by means of an arrangement which was called for as much by humanity, as by the interest of the repose of Europe. The first article stated, "The contracting powers will offer to the Ottoman Porte their mediation, with the view of bringing about a reconciliation between it and the Greeks." It could not, it appeared to him, be doubted, that the object of the contracting powers throughout was the general preservation of the tranquillity of Europe, and the reconciliation of the Porte with Greece. His honourable friend might quarrel with the means adopted to carry the treaty into effect. That point he would not now discuss; but to the assertion, that the object of the treaty was not one of conciliation, he gave a most unqualified denial.

He would not attempt to follow his honourable friend through the arguments which he had raised on this most complicated question. It was sufficient for him to state, that for seven years the peace of Europe had been placed in jeopardy by a war which, if continued, could end in nothing but the extermination of one of the parties; and that a state of things existed which, when his honourable friend came to know all the proceedings of the allied courts, he would be satisfied, if not put down, would interrupt the general tranquillity of Europe, which it was the object of this country particularly to preserve, and which, if once broken, might lead to the most fearful and extensive consequences. His honourable friend had expressed his surprise, how those who pretended to be the disciples of Mr. Pitt, could suppose they were promoting the interests of England, by venturing upon such an interference with the internal concerns of an independent nation, as the world had seen in the treaty of the 6th of July. Now he professed himself to be one of those humble individuals who took a pride in adopting the policy of that great master mind; and he said, that the policy of this country, not only during the time of Mr. Pitt, but also during the time of Mr. Fox, and indeed during the time of all the distinguished statesmen who had directed its counsels, with reference to its interests being connected with the general peace and tranquillity of Europe, was not to interfere unnecessarily with the domestic concerns of other nations, but certainly not to withhold our interference, whenever it became necessary, to re-establish the peace and harmony of the world, and to restore a good understanding among contending powers. It was no departure from the law of nations, but a sound application of its principle, to interpose under such circumstances, whatever

the honourable member for Dorsetshire might urge to the contrary.

His honourable friend had quoted the example of Holland in the year 1787, and had admitted that Mr. Pitt received the approbation of his great rival, Mr. Fox, for his interposition on that occasion. But under what circumstances, he would ask, did that interposition take place? The King of Prussia thought that an insult had been offered by the states of Holland to his sister, the wife of the Stadtholder. Was that, it was asked, a fit object for British interference? Certainly not. But then there was a French faction in the country, which was obtaining a preponderating influence. If that were so, then what became of his honourable friend's principle that we were not to interfere in the domestic concerns of another, even for the preservation of that balance of power, without which it was impossible to hope for the continuance of peace? Such never had been either the doctrine or the practice of those who had hitherto directed the destinies of England. We had endeavoured never to interfere gratuitously in the internal concerns of independent nations; but whenever we had interposed, our interposition, when ably directed, had always been directed to effect one purpose, and that the preservation of the peace of Europe. He was quite sure that his honourable friend, when he should hereafter peruse all the documents connected with and arising out of, the treaty of the 6th of July, would be convinced, that a war in the east of Europe, which would have placed the tranquillity of the whole of Europe in jeopardy, had been completely prevented by the interposition of England.

He must repeat, over and over again, that he could by no means agree with the conclusion to which his honourable friend wished to bring the House, that the country had been guilty of gross injustice, in acceding to the treaty of the 6th July. He must tell him again, that the object of that treaty, the only end which it was intended to attain, was the same which we had in view, when we signed the protocol of St. Petersburg—was the same which we had in view, during the time of Lord Strangford's residence at Constantinople, namely, the general pacification of Europe without going to war, and the prevention of that state of things, which if it once came into existence, must necessarily lead, at one day or other, to a general war throughout Europe. No one, he thought, would expect him to state, on the present occasion, what measures the Government was now adopting to give effect to that treaty. The reasons why he should not enter upon such a statement were too obvious to require repetition. He therefore certain that it would be enough for him to state, Government was proceeding fully, fairly, and faithfully,

to execute the treaty, in the same spirit in which it had entered into it in concert with our august allies.

He had stated already, and he would repeat the statement, that he regretted extremely, that the honourable member for Westminster had brought forward his motion at this particular time. The honourable member seemed to think that there was a considerable advantage to the public service in having motions of this description—he meant motions for giving the thanks of Parliament to officers and men who had distinguished themselves in fighting the battles of the country—originated by individuals who were unconnected with the Government, and not fettered by the ties of party. The honourable member had stated, that there were occasions when such honours would be rendered more gratifying to the individuals on whom they were bestowed, by the circumstance of their having been proposed by the party which was in opposition to the Government, and which, therefore, could have had no share in planning the expedition which they had carried to a successful termination. He could not pretend to deny the abstract proposition, that there might be such occasions, but sure he was that the present was not an occasion on which it would be either prudent or politic to make such an experiment as the honourable member for Westminster had recommended to the House. It was impossible for the honourable member to be acquainted with all the circumstances which had reference to this transaction. The honourable member thought himself much better informed respecting them than he really was, for he had stated, among other things, that he knew that the report which had been made by a gallant friend of his, who had been sent into the Mediterranean to inquire into the circumstances preceding the battle of Navarino, had been perfectly satisfactory upon all points. [Mr. Hobhouse.—I did not say upon all points, but upon most.] I can only say, (continued Mr. Huskisson), that if the honourable member for Westminster has that knowledge, his knowledge far exceeds mine. I do not mean by this to say, nor do I wish it to be understood, that there is any thing deficient in the explanation of the transaction, which has been sent home by the gallant admiral who commands in the Mediterranean. But I do say this, that no report has come to my knowledge, or, as far as I am informed, to the knowledge of any member of his Majesty's Government, conveying any opinion of my gallant friend to the effect stated by the honourable member. The honourable member assumes that his case is completely established on the report of the gallant officer to whom I before alluded. Now it so happens, that the gallant officer in question was not called on to make a report, and he has not, as far as I know, made any report.

Before I proceed further into this part of my subject, I cannot help noticing the fact, that the honourable member for Westminster has more than once insinuated, that the great honour which he considers to be due to Sir Edward Codrington, and the gallant men who served under his command, is refused to him, owing to the changes which have recently taken place in the cabinet—owing to some paltry intrigue which he conceives to have been going forward, or, to use his own words, “owing to the better passions having been absorbed by domestic jealousies.”

[MR. HOBHOUSE: I did not speak positively, but hypothetically. I said—If Ministers act so and so towards Sir E. Codrington, people will say so and so of them; and the conclusions to which future historians will come, will be, that the better passions were absorbed by domestic jealousies.]

MR. HUSKISSON said, he was happy to hear the explanation of the honourable member. He asserted, however, that there never had existed, on the part of any cabinet since the battle of Navarino, any, the smallest intention to propose the thanks of Parliament to the officers and men who were engaged in that affair. He would tell the honourable member the reason why such an intention could not enter into the mind of any prudent and sensible Minister. It was this:—We voted the thanks of Parliament for triumphs over our enemies—we voted them to mark our satisfaction, that in a conflict, which we had foreseen and directed, with a power against which we had declared war, the skill and gallantry and zeal of our officers had triumphed over the skill and gallantry and zeal of our enemies—and that they have maintained by that skill, gallantry, and zeal, the ancient superiority of our country above all others. But, could any reasonable man ever think of passing a similar vote on the present occasion, unless a precedent were quoted in justification of it from the records of Parliament? He was ready to maintain, that no precedent could be found which would justify the House in giving a vote of thanks to any officer for a catastrophe which ended in a lamentable effusion of blood which we never intended to shed, and in the total destruction of the naval force of an ally whom we never intended to injure. Would it be right to mark our sense of such an accident, and he might say of such a misfortune,—for being an accident, it was also a misfortune,—by voting the thanks of Parliament to the authors of it,—he said it not invidiously,—as we should vote them for a victory obtained in a time of open and declared war?

The honourable member seemed to think that he had found a which ran completely parallel with the present, in the vote thanks which was given to the officers and soldiers who were

employed in the expedition which was sent to Copenhagen in 1807. The honourable member felt how weak his argument was on this point; for he laboured exceedingly in endeavouring to draw a distinction between approving the conduct and approving the policy of the war. Now with all due deference to the honourable member, it appeared quite unnecessary to him to draw any such distinction. How many gentlemen were there who disapproved altogether of the policy of the war from its commencement to its close; and who yet, whilst we were engaged in the war, never, when a case arose which called upon Parliament to acknowledge by its thanks the gallantry of our soldiers and our sailors, thought of mixing up the question of their gallantry with that of the policy which rendered a display of it necessary. He would now ask the House to consider what was the case at Copenhagen. Instructions were distinctly given to our commanders by sea and land to attack and capture that capital, and to use their best exertions for the attainment of that object. They were likewise told, that they were to consider eight days as the utmost extent of the period during which they were to abstain from hostilities. It so happened that, before one of those eight days had expired, the King of Denmark issued a declaration of war against England. He would not now speak of the policy of the expedition to Copenhagen, as the honourable member did not pretend to dispute its wisdom, being now more enlightened as to the grounds on which it was sent out, than the individuals who attacked the justice of it at the time, without knowing any thing of the causes which led to it. It was sufficient for him to say that what was done at Copenhagen was done in consequence of direct and positive orders from the Government at home, and that we were, moreover, placed in a state of war with Denmark by the declaration of the Danish Government. But was this, or any thing like this, the state of affairs between the English and the Turkish Governments in the Mediterranean? No such thing. We were bound by the treaty of the 6th of July to interpose our forces between the contending parties, in order to bring about an armistice *de facto*, in case it could not be otherwise obtained.

He would not enter into the question, whether Ibrahim Pacha had or had not broken the terms of the armistice which had been first made between him and the gallant officer who commanded our squadron. He believed that he had. He would only say, that the gallant admiral did not enter the bay of Navarino with a view of attacking the Turkish fleet, but with a view of obtaining, by his position, a compliance with the terms of the armistice which he had settled with its commander, Ibrahim Pacha. Upon entering that bay, there ensued a scene in which the greatest skill,

seamanship, and gallantry, were evinced by Sir Edward Codrington and every officer and man under his command. It was no small addition to the praise which the gallant admiral had obtained by his valour and skill, that he had effected that, which it was not always easy to effect, when the forces of rival powers were employed together for a joint object, that he had conciliated them by his conduct, and that he had so produced a unity of purpose and a harmony of design, which could not have been exceeded, if the force employed had been entirely British, and under the command of a British officer, as much beloved, as he understood Sir Edward Codrington had the happiness of being by every man who sailed under his orders.

Having made this statement, in which he assured the House that he was most sincere, he hoped that he should not hereafter be accused of underrating either the skill or valour of Sir Edward Codrington, because he could not accede to the present motion. The affair in which he had so eminently distinguished himself, was not a battle between enemies—it was an accident—a misfortune—which could not be foreseen, and perhaps, under the circumstances, could not be avoided: it was an event which, if he were talking of municipal concerns, he should style a chance-medley. He was convinced that it would be so called in the verdict, if a coroner's jury could examine into the merits of it. But it did not follow, that, because it was chance-medley, there might not have been exhibited in it as great gallantry and skill as were ever exhibited by the bravest men in the noblest exploits of either ancient or modern warfare.

The honourable member for Westminster had made another groundless assumption to which he must beg leave to call the attention of the House. He had assumed, that his gallant friend, Sir John Gore, had been sent to make inquiries in the Mediterranean, because a foreign newspaper, the "Austrian Observer," had circulated sundry calumnies detrimental to the conduct and character of the British admiral. He could assure the honourable member, that this was the first time he had ever heard such a reason assigned for sending out his gallant friend. He could further assure him, that no such reason had ever influenced his Majesty's Government. The Government certainly felt that it was incumbent upon it to make further inquiries as to the character of the armistice which had been established in the Morea, between the officer in command of the British squadron, and the officer in command of the Turkish forces. The queries which had been sent out had received distinct and explicit answers. Those queries had been received, and they proved beyond a question, that there had been nothing precipitate or rash in the conduct of the officer commanding the British fleet. He stated this the more willingly,

because he was sincerely anxious that Sir Edward Codrington should stand clear of all blame in a transaction which, under the circumstances, was perhaps unavoidable. But he was bound to say, that it was the duty of Government, to ascertain, by all possible queries, that such really was the character of the transaction. The honourable member must be convinced, that it was an affair in which the country found much to lament, and that its issue was such as men of all parties could not fail to deprecate, so far as it regarded England; for he would not enter into the feelings of the honourable member, and inquire whether it was a good issue, as terminating hostilities between Greece and Turkey. It might or might not have that effect—time alone would show. But what was most likely to have been its immediate effect upon British interests? It might have led to the massacre of all the British subjects in the Turkish dominions, and to the confiscation of all their property by the Porte. Fortunately it had not produced that result; but one of its negative effects was undeniable. It had not produced the execution of the objects of the treaty of the 6th of July, as contemplated by those who signed it, and wished it to be executed without the effusion of human blood.

The honourable member for Westminster had next referred to what had taken place when we sent an expedition to Algiers, though I must (said Mr. Huskisson) confess my inability to perceive the manner in which those occurrences can be made applicable to the present subject. I can tell the honourable member, that the gross ignorance which prevailed at Algiers, respecting the extent of our resources and power, did not exist at Constantinople. Though the brother to the Sun and Moon, the lord of the Black, White, and Yellow Seas, the Master of Millions, as the honourable member tells us the Sultan styles himself—may look upon us as a set of traders, who do nothing but sell razors and buy raisins in the Levant, and may call our King the chief of a set of scissor-grinders, I can tell him, though the honourable member has spent some time in Turkey, and I have not, that the Reis Effendi is very well informed of every thing which passes in Europe, and is by no means deficient in the knowledge of European politics. I can tell him further, that if the Reis Effendi was called upon to speak of our expedition to Algiers, he would be able to give the honourable member for Westminster more information respecting it than that which he at present enjoys.

The right honourable Secretary then proceeded to examine into the history of the expedition sent to Algiers, under the command of Lord Exmouth. The honourable member for Westminster said, that our fleet went to Tunis and Tripoli, and elsewhere, demanding and obtaining from the governors of those places, assurances that they would cease from their old practices

of cruising indiscriminately against all Christian flags; that our fleet next went to Algiers, where its demands were met, not with compliance but refusal; that Lord Exmouth waited a few days before the port, and that he then proceeded to attack and bombard it. Now he had not looked recently at the history of that transaction; but, as far as he recollected it, the true version of it was this:—Lord Exmouth returned from Algiers to England, and reported to the Government, that he had not been able to make the same agreement with the Dey of Algiers as he had made with the other Barbary Powers; for the Dey declared that he would persevere in cruising against the Christian powers, and in holding their subjects in captivity. What then took place? Lord Exmouth was sent back to Algiers with a greater number of ships, and with instructions to compel the Dey to submission. The analogy, therefore, which the honourable member attempted to draw between that case and the present completely failed. In the first case, there was an expedition sent out for a specific purpose—of a hostile nature; that purpose was executed, and Parliament was consequently called upon to praise the skill and gallantry which distinguished those who took an active part. In the present case, the expedition was sent out for a pacific purpose; and out of an unexpected collision with the Turkish fleet arose that victory, which, though it was honourable to our arms, was still not a subject for Parliamentary congratulation.

He was not to be deterred from the strict line of his public duty by any appeals that might be made to his feelings, on the nature of the contest which had been so long raging between the Greeks and Turks. Though, as a private individual, he might have a strong opinion as to the character of the contest, and might sympathize with the struggles of a population which had for ages been ground down by the most intolerable slavery; as a public man, he could not yield to the influence of such feelings. He would say at once, that such feelings were not sufficient of themselves to warrant the interference of any foreign state in the contest for the interests of the Greeks alone. If British interests were not endangered by the continuance of the conflict, we were not called upon to interfere,—nay, we were not justified in interfering,—on account of the cruel slavery to which the Greeks had been so long exposed. He was not to be deterred by the honourable member for Westminster saying, that if we did not bestow a vote of thanks on Sir Edward Codrington, we should be unjust not only to him but to ourselves. He contended that the present was an exception from the general rule established in the other cases to which the honourable member had referred. He thought that he had demolished all the precedents which the honourable member had brought forward in support of his present motion;

but even if he had not, still there was a wide difference between this case and all such precedents. It would be a bad proceeding to proclaim a triumph, and to indulge in the feelings of victory, where there had been neither an enemy nor a triumph. He did not doubt the gallantry, he did not mean to dispute the discretion, of Sir Edward Codrington; but he must say to the House of Commons, "Be cautious before you create a precedent of thanks for an event which grew out of an accident, lest officers, looking at the signal benefit conferred on them by receiving such thanks, should be found prone to cherish too easy a disposition to create such accidents, and lest such accidents so created should lead to consequences which the country may long have reason to rue and to regret."

He was sorry to have detained the House so long on a question which, after all, lay in a very narrow compass. It surprised him more than all that the honourable member for Westminster, who seemed aware that he should not receive general support to his motion from the sober judgment of the House, and who knew well that if no change had taken place in the councils of his Majesty, no such a proposal as was then before the House would ever have been made to it;—it surprised him more than all that the honourable member, who, from feeling how his case laboured, had searched through the records of Parliament in order to find precedents in which thanks were conferred for brilliant actions like those at Navarino, should have overlooked one slight precedent which made completely against him. The honourable member had referred to the great exploits of the illustrious warrior who was now at the head of the Government, and who had received the thanks of Parliament no less than eleven times for his distinguished services. He believed there was no man who then heard him, who did not rejoice, and feel exceeding glad, that they had so often had an opportunity of thanking that great and able chieftain. He believed that to the exploits which elicited those thanks we were indebted for the liberties of England and the peace of Europe; and he further believed, that it was the intention of that unrivalled captain to maintain by his councils in the cabinet, that peace undisturbed which he had been so instrumental in obtaining by his sword in the field. He was surprised, he repeated, that the honourable member in his researches should have overlooked the little incident which he had before alluded to. Did the honourable member ever hear of that most distinguished victory, which the British forces achieved at Toulouse? It was one of the most brilliant feats of arms in which the noble duke was ever engaged. He defeated Marshal Soult, —he drove him from an entrenched position which even his own officers conceived too hazardous to attack; and he displayed,

during the whole conflict, a combination of valour, skill, and coolness, which had never been excelled before. But, though this was one of the most gallant achievements of the whole war, it was not noticed by Parliament; because a cessation of arms had taken place before the intelligence of it reached England. In consequence of such unexpected forgetfulness, the late Duke of Norfolk had asked the noble lord, who was at the head of the government in the other House, whether it was not intended to thank the Duke of Wellington for that his last and greatest battle? Unquestionably his noble friend felt that the importance and magnitude of that battle gave the noble duke a title to add another vote of thanks to the numerous votes which he had already received from the gratitude of Parliament. But what was the statement which the noble lord made in his place in Parliament? It was this,—that as the war had ceased, he did not intend to propose a vote, which might tend to keep up a spirit of exasperation between the two nations.

Having stated that fact, he would now sit down, leaving it to the good sense of the House to decide, whether it would, in this case, create a precedent which, if created, would be attended with inconvenience to the best interests of the country. Had the conflict which gave rise to this proposed vote of thanks taken place with a power with whom we were at war, he should not have had any reluctance, even though it was a barbarous power, to confer the honour of their thanks upon Sir E. Codrington and his brave followers; but under present circumstances, he was obliged to withhold it, not from any wish to impute the slightest blame to that gallant officer, but from a wish to guard the country from future difficulty and inconvenience. He would not move a negative to the present motion, lest it should be supposed he meant to deny the gallantry and skill of Sir E. Codrington; but he was sorry to say, that the reasons which he had stated to the House, convinced him that it was his duty to move the previous question.

The motion was withdrawn.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT OF CANADA.

MAY 24, 1828.

IN pursuance of the notice, that he would this day move for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the state of the Civil Government of Canada,

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON rose, and spoke in substance as follows:—

The subject to which I am about to call the attention of the House, on the present occasion, is one which, however it may bear—and it chiefly does bear—upon interests and feelings in a great degree removed from those which ordinarily affect ourselves, is nevertheless a matter of considerable importance. The question which I wish at this time to induce the House to investigate is, whether those extensive, valuable, and fertile possessions of the Crown, known under the name of the Canadas, are or are not administered under a system of civil government, adapted to the wants, the well-being, and the happiness of nearly a million of British subjects, and to the permanent maintenance of those intimate relations of allegiance and protection, which ought always to exist between the colonies and the mother country. If, upon inquiry, it shall be found, that the present system of government in those states is not well adapted to all these purposes, and that the remedy for the evil cannot be applied without the authority of parliament—it will be for parliament to deal with the question, with a view to the introduction of such modifications, improvements, and alterations in the existing system, as may appear necessary.

But, Sir, though considerable evils, and great and acknowledged defects may be found to exist in the present system, and some oversights may be discovered in its administration, it by no means follows, that any particular individual is responsible, or can be justly accused of occasioning those imperfections. Sir, the constitution under which the Canadas are now governed, was devised and introduced by some of the greatest statesmen that ever appeared within these walls. But when we consider how little the country in question was then known, and to what a limited extent its resources and interests were understood, it will not appear matter of astonishment, that in a country like Canada, imperfectly known, and so thinly peopled as it was when the present form of

civil government was established, the system devised for its government should have been found extremely defective. Neither will it appear unaccountable, that, in the details of this system, there should be many difficulties which require to be removed, many imperfections which require a remedy, many omissions which it is now our duty to supply.

In the great and leading principle of the present system—the strict maintenance, on the one hand, of good faith towards the descendants of the native French population in Lower Canada, and on the other, of extending to that province, as far as consistent with our engagements towards them, all the advantages of British institutions and British laws—there can, I think, be no difference of opinion in this House. Neither, fortunately, can there be any as to the right of this House to examine fully into the merits or defects of the present constitution of Canada, as established by the act which first granted that constitution—and to revise it in such manner, as to us may appear proper. I mean the celebrated Quebec Act of 1791. It is unnecessary to enter into any abstract or general argument upon this point; because not only does this right appear to be expressly reserved and declared by the very wording of the preamble of this act; but if there could be any doubt on this point, it would be at once removed by a reference to the declarations made in this House at the time when it was introduced. On that occasion, Mr. Pitt expressly provided, that nothing which it contained should be held as not liable to such further alterations and amendments as circumstances might, from time to time, appear to require. It carries the principle of modification or repeal, even to the reserved lands, allotted for the use and maintenance of the Established Church in Canada. It is, therefore, clearly apparent, that we are, at present, quite as much at liberty to consider the act of 1791, with reference to the amendment of any imperfection or defect contained in it, as we are at liberty to consider, in a similar manner, any other act of the legislature. I own that I cannot but think it very fortunate, that no doubt can exist upon this point. I am glad that the supreme power of the British Parliament to deal with defects or difficulties of this nature, and to reform the previous act of the Legislature, in regard to the government of our Canadian territories, cannot be disputed. I am the rather disposed to rejoice at this circumstance, because, standing aloof, as we do, from the party feelings and local jealousies of the Canadians, our decision will be the more respected; first, as coming from a high and competent authority, and next, on account of our manifest impartiality. On both these grounds I am satisfied that the final determination of Parliament, with regard to the civil government of the Canadas, will be cheerfully received, and

readily acquiesced in. In this view of the subject I confess I feel sanguine as to the result of our interference. I consider it calculated to allay the animosities of the Canadians, and, if wisely conducted, well adapted to place the system of government in our North-American territories on a satisfactory and permanent footing; thus conducing at once to the manifest benefit of the colonies, and to the interests of the mother country.

Now, Sir, I will not fatigue the House with any long detail of the constitutional and legal history of Canada, since it was first ceded to his Majesty's Government by the peace of 1763. But it is necessary to take a short review of the principal measures which have since been adopted by the Crown and by Parliament, for the government and settlement of these provinces. By the treaty of Paris in 1763, Canada was ceded to the British Crown, without any stipulation or obligation whatever with respect to the mode in which the Government was to be administered. So far from there being any condition or qualification connected with the surrender of these provinces, they were yielded up to England by France in full sovereignty and complete possession, as in the case of a new conquest. Perhaps it may be necessary to state, that the country was settled by the French about the year 1660, when the first French governor was appointed. At that time the population was principally, if not wholly, confined to the banks of the river St. Lawrence, and the two towns then built, namely Montreal and Quebec; and at the period of the conquest the French settlers did not exceed sixty-five thousand. This was the utmost extent of the colony at this epoch of its history. But though the population was so very limited, and although it was placed under circumstances, and with wants and necessities, so different from what it could possibly have experienced in the mother country, it was nevertheless thought wise and just by the French government, to graft on so extremely limited a stock, the whole of the feudal system of France, as it existed in all its odious deformities, about the middle of the seventeenth century. We may apply to this conduct what has been said of those who built country-seats about the same period—that they adopted all the faults and sacrifices of comfort observable at Versailles, whilst they still wanted its grandeur. Such was the state of Canada under the French régime. The feudal system flourished in all its vigour among a small population, and in the midst of a desert. The mother country grafted upon the other institutions of her colony a law of succession—not the general French law of succession, which was that of primogeniture, but a system denominated “the Custom of Paris.” So that, connecting the effects of this law of succession with the influence of the feudal system in Canada, while under the dominion of the French, the

consequences to the colony were any thing rather than beneficial. The lords paramount held directly under the Crown, and granted certain portions of lands to their vassals. These seignories (according to the law of succession to which I have alluded) were not capable of severance; but have been divided and subdivided, ever since the period of their first institution, because the holder of the land owed suit and service to the lord paramount. Now, however, they are subdivided into shares so minute as to be greatly to the advantage of those who administer the existing system of civil law; at the same time that the circumstance is equally disadvantageous to the interests of persons possessing, or claiming to possess, property in them. Such is the natural consequence and effect of the complicated state of tenures in the Canadas. It was no longer ago than this morning that I saw in a Canada paper an advertisement of the sale of a one-thirteenth of a hundredth part of a lordship. Some of the notices of sale in these colonies are extremely curious, and comprehend fractional parts of fractions of estates, of a nature to puzzle Mr. Finlayson himself, with all his skill in figures. We read constantly of the third of a seventh, and the half of a sixth of a lordship to be disposed of. I recollect a notice of the sale of a forty-fourth of a fourth of a tenth of a sixth share of an estate; another, of an eleventh of a fourth of a fifth of a sixth; and another of a forty-fourth of a fifth of a sixth. Under this curious and rather puzzling state of the law, by which seignories are divided into such impracticable shares, it is almost impossible for any individual to tell to whom it is that he owes suit and service. Yet a great many duties are imposed under the feudal system, some of them to be paid in kind, and some in money. For instance, there are fines, annual duties on all alienations of property, and various rights and duties of a most vexatious and harassing nature.

Sir, very shortly after the treaty, by which, in 1763, Canada was ceded to the Crown, the King of England issued a proclamation, inviting such of his subjects as were so disposed to settle in the newly-acquired territory; declaring the royal intention shortly to confer a Legislative Assembly on the colony, and informing them, that all persons settling in the country should forthwith enjoy the benefit and protection derivable from British laws and courts of judicature. Until the year 1774, British laws were, as far as possible, introduced and carried into effect in the colony. British courts of justice were established, with proper judges to administer the law, and the whole system of British judicature was set on foot, according to the terms of his Majesty's proclamation. The other part of the proclamation, however, contained an assurance relative to the appointment of a Legislative As-

sembly, was not carried into effect. In 1774, from the situation in which other provinces of America, then belonging to the Crown, were placed, it was not thought expedient, by the government of the day, to grant a Legislative Assembly to Canada. It appeared, about this time, that the Canadians were greatly attached to their original system of legislation, and not well satisfied with that more recently introduced amongst them. Accordingly, it being thought desirable to conciliate the loyalty, affection, and good-will, of our Canadian subjects at that juncture, in 1774 it was, for the first time, mentioned in Parliament, that it would be desirable to pass an act of the legislature, not for the purpose of making good the assurance of 1763, but to recall all the pledges relative to the formation of a system of British jurisprudence, and the establishment of British courts of justice. A bill was accordingly brought into the House of Commons, for the purpose of effecting this object. The preamble of the act was suggested by, and drawn up in compliance with, the wishes and feelings of the Canadians, and went upon the principle, that the French laws, to which they had been long accustomed, were well adapted to their situation and circumstances. The bill itself recalls all the declarations contained in the proclamation of 1763; and re-establishes the French laws and customs as they regard property, and the system of civil law, including the Custom of Paris. However, the same act makes provisions for retaining the administration of the criminal law of England in Canada; which, from 1774, was to be governed by the civil law of France, and the criminal code of England.

Between the years 1763 and 1774, the Crown had proceeded to make grants of land in Canada, with a view to the settlement of the colony, by an additional number of new inhabitants. In all grants out of immediate lordships, the lands were held under tenures of free or common soccage, as contradistinguished from seignories. The holders were placed under the influence of an unintelligible system of law. One estate was held by common soccage, another by a different tenure. With respect to civil rights, as I have already said, the French law and administration was established; but the English system of jurisprudence prevailed in criminal matters. In the same year, 1774, another important act, and one well calculated to conciliate the favourable feelings and loyalty of the Canadians towards the Crown, received the sanction of the legislature. By this act, it was provided, that all customs and duties (and they are numerous, onerous, and oppressive), heretofore imposed on the colonists by France, and from the date of the conquest to that year payable to England, should thenceforth and for ever cease and determine. In lieu of these imposts, the act appointed other duties of a more

easy and equitable nature; the produce of which was to be appropriated, not to the advantage of the mother country, but to defray the expenses necessarily attendant on the administration of civil justice, and the maintenance of the local government of Canada.

In the memorable year 1774, besides these two boons to the Canadians—the restoration of the system of civil law, of which they approved and under which they had before lived, and the abolition of the French duties—another was conferred. This consisted in the recognition, by this country, of the established religion, and in a provision being made for its maintenance and support;—a boon which I sincerely trust may never be withdrawn. I have spoken of these measures adopted by England, as boons to the Canadians; for such they were certainly considered by them at the time, whatever may have been the subsequent effects of one of them: suffice it to say, they were afforded in a spirit of conciliation, and accepted with feelings of gratitude and satisfaction. Of the recognition and establishment of the prevailing religion in Canada, in 1774, I have already spoken in terms of approbation, and have only to repeat my hope, that the gift may never be disturbed. No doubt, it was thankfully received, and is gratefully remembered. The restoration of the system of French law, and administration in civil cases, was, in all probability, quite as much prized at the time by the parties, as the provision made for recognising their religious faith. I am satisfied, however, that if not then restored and re-established, the laws in question (which are unfriendly to commerce, and repugnant to enlightened principles of unrestricted dealing) would soon have disappeared under the influence of British enterprise. But, passing by this topic for the present, I may be allowed to remark, that the abolition of the French duties, and the imposition of other and less burthensome taxes, the proceeds of which were applied to the support of the Colonial Government and institutions, was a considerable benefit to the Canadians.

In 1778, a law was passed in this country, which, although not immediately bearing upon, or having reference to, Canada, was yet of considerable importance, as well to that as to our other colonies. I allude to the Declaratory act, by which this country relinquished all future right to tax its colonies; granting them the power to impose duties themselves, which duties were to be applied to the support of their own institutions and establishments, and were not to form part of the revenue of Great Britain. At this time there existed, perhaps, a doubt, as to whether the act applied to Canada. Some thought that the bill was only meant to apply to our colonies in the West Indies, and to those places in America that retained their allegiance to England, and had

legislative assemblies of their own, which were hereby authorised to tax themselves. But, however the fact might be, in this state Canada remained until the year 1791, when it was thought necessary by Mr. Pitt to introduce his bill, since known by the appellation of the "Quebec Act." This law attracted more notice at the time of its enactment, principally on account of the then state of parties in the House of Commons, than it might, in all probability, have otherwise done, by reason of its intrinsic interest or importance. Mr. Pitt thought it no more than what was due to the growing importance and wealth of Canada, to give that colony a popular representation. By one of the provisions of this act, the right and control over all imposts was vested in an assembly, to be so constituted. We should bear this circumstance in mind, because what now exists has reference to this act. By the act of 1774, the system of civil law of the colony was established, and provisions were made for the support of its government, by means of moderate duties then imposed. Under the act of 1791, all duties were to be imposed and appropriated as the colonial legislature should determine. Another object of the act was, to divide the colony into two separate provinces—Upper and Lower Canada,—giving to each a separate legislature. It was considered desirable to encourage loyalists and disbanded soldiers to become settlers in Upper Canada, where there were no French settlers, and where no feudal system was in operation. The act provided, that in the province of Lower Canada, the legislative assembly should consist of not less than fifty members, while in Upper Canada (then about to be settled) the population being more scanty, the minimum of members of assembly was fixed at fifteen. In Upper Canada the assembly was to be increased, as the province should become more thickly peopled. These details were left to those who administered the government in the colony. The gallant officer who administered the government of Canada in 1792, divided the lower province into eighteen counties, each sending two members to the assembly: three counties sending each one representative; two cities privileged to elect four members; one town sending two members, and one electing one representative; making a total of fifty. What I complain of is, that the representation was not equally distributed. It was a great error to take the density of population many years ago, and apply it, as a permanent standard, to the number of representatives to be chosen for particular places and departments. The effect of this erroneous principle has necessarily been, to throw the chief power of representation into the hands of the seignories. The same defect exists in Upper as in Lower Canada. The English settlers are excluded from a fair participation in what ought to be a popular representation, and the

power of election is thrown into the hands of the descendants of the French.

Sir, I state these complaints with the more confidence, because, in all parts of Canada, it is agreed that the present system works so ill as to stand in need of alteration. Under the present practice, the English settler is exposed to great inconvenience, and suffers an exclusion from advantages, of which it is only just that he should enjoy a reasonable share. I allude now to the condition of our countrymen in Lower Canada; but, in doing so, I do not desire to make it a matter of charge against those who represent the French seignories, that they act as they do. It is the system, and not the individuals that requires reformation. There is no possibility of suing or being sued, except in the French courts, and according to the French form and practice—no mode of transacting commercial business, except under the French customs, now obsolete in France itself. In Lower Canada, they go upon the law and system of feudal tenure, and the law is more incapable of ever being improved or modified by the progress of information and knowledge, than if it still remained the system of France and the model of her dependencies. Here in the midst of a wilderness flourishes the French feudal system, and the custom of Paris of centuries ago. The result is, that Englishmen in Canada are as much like aliens and settlers in foreign land, as an equal number of British subjects, who should have sat down in the centre of France in the thirteenth century.

It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, Sir, that our countrymen have had to encounter considerable difficulty in Lower Canada, and that but a slow progress has been made towards the settlement of that province, as compared with the Upper. In fact, the inconvenience of the existing condition of things cannot be well understood in this country. In this colony the law of mortgage is in the worst state. The registration of deeds is another point deserving attention; and the laws and usages relating to the formation of roads are those of the old French feudal system. The consequence has been, that in the last fifteen years not one single road-bill has been passed by the legislative assembly of that province. Thus, there is no opportunity afforded to the English townships of communicating with the river St. Lawrence, except by some of its tributary streams, on account of the interposition of the seignories between them and that river. In the same manner, another part of what I consider an important public duty in a legislative assembly is overlooked. I mean the education of the children of the settlers. That is a subject never thought of. In point of fact, the state of things is such, that the settlers feel more disposed to connect themselves with the districts which border on the United States, where they can

have their wants of this description supplied, and receive the benefits of the administration of justice, than to remain in the country to which they owe allegiance.

These evils, Sir, have, I regret to say, been of some standing, but they have been more severely felt, as the capital and population of this country have been directed to these colonies, and as they have become of greater importance to the interests of the mother country. Having become sensible of the evil, the question now arises as to what remedy shall be applied to it. One was suggested, and attempted to be carried into effect, about four years back, by which the two legislatures were to be incorporated into one; that is, the Upper, or English part of the province, was to be reunited under one Government, with the French or Lower part of it. There were various grounds on which the bill which my right honourable friend introduced with that view was opposed; but the principal one, I believe, was the lateness of the period of the session at which it was brought forward. That bill, therefore, did not pass. Whether the remedy it proposed is the best that can be imagined, I will not undertake to say; but it is certainly open to many serious objections. Those, however, will be proper subjects for the consideration of the committee which I mean to propose. Another remedy that has been suggested is to form all the English townships, as they are, for the sake of distinction, called, into a third province. To that scheme also the objections are numerous and serious. Indeed, none have been devised that are not subject to many objections. It will be the duty of the committee to point out that course which presents the fewest, to reconcile the conflicting pretensions of the different parties, and thus to remove the great obstacles to the improvement of this important colony.

But, Sir, these are not the only considerations that have induced me to recommend the House to take into its consideration the state of the civil government of Canada. Besides the obstacles I have mentioned, as lying in the way of the happiness of this colony, another, of a most formidable nature, has grown up out of the state of the representative system, as I have described it. I allude to the disputes which have arisen, concerning the extent of control which the colonial legislature should have over the public revenue of the colony and its fiscal regulations. I have already stated that, in 1774, all the taxes that had been imposed under the French régime were abrogated, and other duties levied in their stead, which were appropriated by the Crown to defray the expenses of the administration of justice, and of the civil establishment of the colony. The duties, thus levied in lieu of the old French ones, I may describe technically as the permanent revenue of the Crown. It amounts to about 85,000*l.* per

annum, and has been applied to the purposes for which it was appropriated by the act of 1774. Besides this, the Crown has a small revenue called "the casualty revenue," which consists of fines, forfeitures, and other in-comings, belonging to the Crown, as the Lord Paramount. This revenue amounts to about 5,000*l*. per annum, and is at the absolute disposal of the Crown; but this also has been appropriated to the civil services of the country. The remaining revenue of the colony arises from taxes imposed since 1791, by the colonial legislature. Part of this revenue the Assembly has appropriated specifically to discharge the expenses of its own sittings, and part to the improvement of the navigation of the river St. Lawrence. The remainder has been appropriated by the legislature to the different expenses of the colony generally. The amount thus collected by the taxes imposed by the Assembly has been, upon an average, about 140,000*l*. per annum. There are also some small sums raised, by virtue of acts of this House, passed for the purpose of regulating the trade of the colony.

For some time after the passing of the act in 1774, nothing could go on more smoothly than the system it established. The Crown had divested itself of the power it had over the permanent revenue; and the sum raised under that name, although small, was sufficient for the maintenance of the civil service, and of the judicial establishments. Afterwards, however, the necessity of making roads, and numerous other expenses, incidental to a rising colony, rendered this sum insufficient. It became necessary, therefore, to raise a larger sum; and this was done by the authority of the House of Assembly. By what degrees, in what manner, and under what circumstances, a difference grew up between the local legislature and the executive government, it is not necessary for me to trace, for any of the purposes which I have now in view. The present state of the controversy, however, is of this nature. The House of Assembly of Lower Canada claims the right of appropriating the permanent revenue, item by item; that is to say, the right of deciding what branches of the civil service, and what of the judicial establishments, should receive their incomes, and in what portions, from this fund. On the other part, it is maintained, and, as it appears to me, in a manner absolutely incontrovertible in law, that the Crown possesses over this revenue a discretionary power, as to the proportions in which it is to be distributed, provided it be for purposes directed by the act. I believe there is no lawyer who will deny, that as long as the Crown appropriates that revenue to the administration of justice in Canada, and to its civil government, pursuant to the words of the Act of 1774—as long as it fulfils all the conditions required by good faith towards the Canadians,

—it has a right to prescribe the mode in which the revenue, consistently with that Act, shall be expended. There is no one who will not say, that the pretensions of the legislative body to take the whole management of this money into its own hands, are neither founded in law nor practice. On the other hand, the House of Assembly holding the public purse in its hands, having the complete command of the general revenue, in order to enforce its unreasonable pretensions, have refused to appropriate any part of the larger revenue, of which they have the command, unless the appropriation of the permanent Crown revenue be given up to them also.

This, Sir, is the state of the controversy between the executive and legislative body in Canada. The consequences of the agitation of such a question as this, in which both parties have stood upon their extreme rights, have been most unfortunate. One of the consequences has been, the necessity under which the representative of the King has found himself, of appropriating money for the necessary services of the colony, without the sanction of the colonial legislature. Such a thing as this, in a country with a legislative assembly, can only be justified by the absolute necessity of preventing general confusion, and the subversion of the government. I do not stand here—living as I do, in a country where the rights of the popular branch of the legislature to control the expenditure of the money it raises are so well known and universally acknowledged—to defend the abstract propriety of a governor of a colony, appropriating its revenue without the sanction of an act of the legislature, as required by law; but, pressed by necessity, it ought not, perhaps, to be wondered at, however we may regret the necessity, that a governor should take all the means in his power to maintain the tranquillity of the colony committed to his charge. When principles are pressed to the extreme, a legislature may, no doubt, distress the executive government of a country, and so wear it out by continued opposition, as to have the point in dispute conceded; but what, in the mean time, are the unfortunate results to the people?—what, in the midst of these conflicts, has been the result to the province of Canada? Nothing is expended, of the money raised in this irregular manner, but what is absolutely necessary to carry on the government of the province: all improvement is at a stand, the roads are neglected, education overlooked, the public buildings suffered to fall to decay, and the country generally brought to such a state that there is not a Canadian whose interests do not suffer.

Sir, the recurrence of such a state of things it is our duty to prevent; and I think I have made out a case sufficient to convince the House, that, if we have the right and the power, the

time is arrived which warrants me in calling upon Parliament to interpose its authority, for the purpose of quieting these feuds, and of establishing such a system of civil government in Canada, as may give a fair share to all parties in the province, of the administration of the revenues, so as to render them available for the improvement of the country—such a system as will, on the one hand, give to the Legislative Assembly the power of directing the whole application of the funds appropriated for the internal improvement of the province; and, on the other, restrain them from the exercise of any authority over what I may call the civil list. Every man who knows any thing of the country must be aware of the unfitness of the King's representative in the government, and the judicial establishment for the administration of criminal justice, which is the same as that of England, depending for their stipends upon the varying judgments of a popular assembly. The inexpediency of this, with regard to the judicial establishment, which in its administration of justice might often come into collision with the members of the Assembly, whose judgment is every year to regulate the reward of their services, must be particularly obvious. Judges have duties to perform, which render it essential that they should be perfectly independent.

I trust I need say no more to convince the House, that the system wished to be established by the Canadian legislature is not compatible with the independence and dignity, either of the King's representative or of the criminal judges. Out of what particular fund these charges should be defrayed, I am not prepared to say; but the present plan of paying a fixed sum out of a variable revenue, I certainly think might be amended. I think some mode might be found, for establishing what I have styled the civil list; from which the salaries of the judicial and other departments should be granted for life, or in any other way that would answer the object I have in view. The remainder of the revenue should then be left at the free disposal of the Colonial legislature. And I must here, in justice to the King's government in Canada, claim for them their due. So far were they from wishing to have the control over any further sum than that to which I have alluded, that they have never hesitated, during the whole of these troubles, to lay before the legislature of the province an account of the application of the revenue, in order that the Assembly might be assured there was no misapplication of it. From this it is evident, that the government there are perfectly willing to accede to the suggestion I have just made, respecting the share of control which it shall have over the colonial revenue.

Sir, I do not think there are any other topics connected with the present state of Canada, which would justify me in detaining House longer, as I trust I have said sufficient to support me

in the motion with which I shall conclude. There are two grounds on which I principally rest. The first, is the state of the representative system in Lower Canada, and the situation of the revenue in respect to the administration of justice; the second, is the controversy which has grown up respecting the powers of the executive and legislative bodies. The case I have made out on those two points is sufficient, I trust, to entitle me to the committee for which I am about to move.

Sir, I should now have concluded all that I feel it necessary to state to the House on the present occasion, if I had not witnessed in some quarters, and I may say in some degree in this House, a disposition to think that all enquiry and concern about Canada are unnecessary, and that the public interest of this country would be best consulted by our at once relinquishing all control and dominion over these possessions. Sir, it is very easy, but I must say it is the proof of a very shallow mind, to lay down a rule of this sort. In British America there are nearly a million of our fellow-subjects, born like ourselves in allegiance to the Crown of this country, anxious to remain in that allegiance,—fulfilling all the duties of it, and having as good a right as ourselves to claim for their persons and property the protection which is the consequence of that allegiance. Is this country, without necessity, without that right being challenged by any one, to incur the indelible disgrace of withdrawing that protection? In contemplating such a question, I will not allow myself to say one word of the advantages, naval, commercial, and political, which we derive from our connexion with our colonies. But I may be allowed to speak of the political character of the country—of the moral impression throughout the world of such an abandonment as is here proposed. I may be allowed to say, that England cannot afford to be little. She must be what she is, or nothing. It is not Canada estimated in pounds, shillings, and pence—but the proudest trophies of British valour, but the character of British faith, but the honour of the British name, which we shall cast off, if upon such considerations as I have heard, we cast off Canada from our protection. We cannot part with our dominions there, without doing an injustice to their fidelity and tried attachment, and tarnishing the national honour. We are not, Sir, at liberty to forego the high and important duties imposed on us by our relative situation towards those colonies. It is a country where no distinctions prevail, such as disturb some of our other territorial possessions abroad. There are no distinctions of castes, no slavery, which tend to engender dissention and disaffection. We have everywhere displayed marks of a paternal government, and planted improvement, not only on our colonies there, but wherever our empire is acknowledged.

Sir, England is the parent of many flourishing colonies—one of them is become an empire among the most powerful in the world. In every quarter of the globe we have planted the seeds of freedom, civilization, and Christianity. To every quarter of the globe we have carried the language, the free institutions, the system of laws, which prevail in this country;—in every quarter they are fructifying and making progress; and if it be said by some selfish calculator, that we have done all this at the expense of sacrifices which we ought not to have made, my answer is,—in spite of these sacrifices, we are still the first and happiest people in the old world; and, whilst this is our lot, let us rejoice rather in that rich harvest of glory, which must belong to a nation that has laid the foundation of similar happiness and prosperity to other nations, kindred in blood, in habits, and in feelings to ourselves.

But, Sir, whether Canada be to remain for ever dependent on England, or to become an independent state—not, I trust, by hostile separation, but by amicable arrangement—it is nevertheless the duty, as it is the interest, of this country, to imbue it with English feeling, and to benefit it by English laws and English institutions. I move, Sir, “That a Select Committee be appointed, to inquire into the state of the Civil Government of Canada, as established by the Act 31 Geo. III., c. 31, and to report their observations and opinions thereupon to the House.”

The motion was agreed to, and a committee appointed.

PROVISION FOR THE FAMILY OF MR. CANNING.

MAY 13th, 1828

THE House resolved itself into a committee on the Officers' Pensions Bill, in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, that the sum of 3,000*l.* a year should be settled on one of the branches of Mr. Canning's family, and be vested in trustees for the use of his family. After the motion had been supported by Lord Morpeth, Sir Robert Wilson, Lord George Bentinck, and opposed by Lord Althorp, Sir M. W. Ridley, Mr. Hume, and Mr. Bankes,

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON said, that having been one of the nearest and dearest friends of the late Mr. Canning, and having been connected with him by the closest ties of personal attachment, throughout rather a long political life, he felt perfectly sensible, before he came down to the House, that, were he to appear prominent in this debate, he should be liable to the reflection of being actuated by that bias, which this connection would naturally suggest. He had, therefore, been anxious not to say one word upon the subject before the House. But, after the speech of his honourable friend* who had spoken last, and spoken in such a manner of his lamented friend—[here Mr. Huskisson laboured under strong emotion, and was loudly cheered during a momentary pause]—he could not sit silent; and with all these disadvantages pressing around him, he could not refrain from giving vent to the feelings which agitated his bosom.

His honourable friend had laid great stress upon what he was pleased to call this mischievous precedent, and had asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he wished to establish such an example as this grant would afford? Now, his right honourable friend meant, on this occasion, to establish no precedent; and he must say, that he looked with some surprise at the attempt which was made to dwell upon this proposition, as one which constituted a serious precedent. What was the fact? Because the Parliament had, on a former occasion, taken away from the Crown certain offices, which having little duties, or being sinecures, were no longer deemed desirable to be upheld, but which had been previously bestowed as a reward for eminent services, and vested this power in the Crown by way of indem-

* Mr. Bankes.

nity, they were to be told that they were creating a new office, and proposing an extravagant waste of the public money. He remembered that, when the new arrangement was made, by which the Crown surrendered its prerogative of rewarding by offices of this description, it was asked, would they limit the Crown by the new act, and shut it out from the means of rewarding able and faithful services? To this it was at the time answered—he forgot whether it was by his honourable friend himself—that, whenever a special case arose, it could only be necessary to apply to Parliament, where a desire would always be found to do justice to eminent services performed for the state. In this spirit, on this occasion, ministers had come to Parliament. And, how were they met? Not by a fulfilment of the former pledge; but by an exclamation—"You are going to create a most dangerous precedent." The answer was, they were not going to create any such evil, but were merely calling upon Parliament to fulfil its own expressed anticipation of claims, for the performance of meritorious services to the state. The Crown had, upon conditions, surrendered that which it need not have otherwise conceded; and it was hard to say, when ministers now came forward in the full spirit of the contract, that they were attempting to introduce a most dangerous precedent. What had the dead-weight act to do with this discussion, seeing that the real object was to give efficacy to an act which was entirely within the spirit of his honourable friend's own principle of economy? The arrangement which pervaded the act given to the Crown, when the sinecure offices were abolished, was simply this:—the Crown was empowered to grant six pensions, not exceeding in the aggregate, 40,000*l.* a year, to ministers who had performed eminent public services, according to their different stations and degrees. If the Crown were in course of paying the whole of this sum (which was not the case), the public would have no right to complain, according to the strict terms of the agreement; for it was a compensation given by Parliament, in exchange for the surrender of a much larger and more valuable amount of patronage. The only limits were six offices, and 40,000*l.*

What was the present proposition? To grant one of these for life to the son of Mr. Canning, in consideration of those services for which his father could, unfortunately, no longer receive reward in his own person. This entailed no increase upon the principal of the fund: it gave one claimant for another; it substituted one life for that which had been withdrawn. And that act, be it remembered, was passed in times of infinitely greater pressure upon the finances of the country, than could now be said to exist. It was passed, likewise, while a committee of finance was sitting, with a careful and deliberate attention to public economy.

His honourable friend had said, that Mr. Canning had optionally given up the lucrative situation in India, which had been conferred upon him when his Majesty called him to a high and honourable situation in his councils at home, and must therefore have considered what he had received, as a full equivalent for that which he had surrendered—that, in fact, he had heartily exchanged the foreign service for the more glorious opening to his ambition at home. Now, upon the sense entertained by Mr. Canning upon what his honourable friend had been pleased to call his choice, he begged to be heard for one moment. He regretted to be obliged to make reference, on such an occasion, to information derived from the privacy of confidential intercourse. He would however state, upon his own personal credit,—he would declare, upon his own reputation as a man, in that house,—that whatever were the feelings of others, who were justly near and dear to Mr. Canning, it had for years been his own warm and anxious wish—owing to circumstances that were likely to press upon the acute and sensitive mind of such a man—to be placed in some public situation, however it might sacrifice or compromise the fair and legitimate scope of his ambition, which, while it enabled him to perform adequate public services, would enable him also to place upon a better footing his wife's private fortune, which he had decreased, and the inheritance of his children, which he had impaired. He would not go so far as to say that this was a prospect fixed upon Mr. Canning's mind, or an object that he was bent upon pursuing, for it was difficult to trace the springs of so susceptible a temperament; but under the circumstances, it was quite natural, considering his means and his family, that while he honourably sought a situation to render service to his country, he should not be unmindful of the means of repairing the fortune of his family, which he had diminished while in the service of that country.

His honourable friend seemed to think, that in these conflicts between the acceptance of particular offices, and the performance of different duties, the decisions were perfectly optional. This was an egregious mistake, and a wrong view of the springs of human action. It was not the principle which governed public men in this country—he hoped and believed not. The principle of Mr. Canning was, when His Majesty had formally called upon him to forego one situation and fill another,—not to look to the right or to the left,—not to consider emolument, but public duty, and to obey the commands of his Sovereign, if there was nothing in the nature of the proposition submitted to him incompatible with his public principles and personal honour. He had in his possession a letter written by Mr. Canning, a very few months after the time when he had cheerfully relinquished the golden

prospects of the East, and when, as his honourable friend seemed to think, he was indulging the gratification of his splendid ambition, in which, speaking of the toils, and anxieties, and pains of his official situation, he used these expressive words—"Would to God that I were now on board the 'Jupiter!'"—the name of the ship destined for his voyage to India. So much, therefore, for his lamented friend's gratifying option! So much for the pleasures and profits of office, which he was supposed to have enjoyed with so much satisfaction!

He entirely concurred in the expression of his honourable friend's opinion upon the necessity of enforcing a principle of economy; but if he was not mistaken, his honourable friend had more than once admitted, that the great offices of the state were not in this country overpaid. For himself, he had indeed always objected to having their salaries or emoluments increased, and had always thought it would be a most unwise policy, not with regard to economy alone, to raise the stipends of the high officers of state. His reason for so thinking had been, because in a country like this, possessed of a wealthy aristocracy and of a number of commoners of large fortune, talents well suited to the service of the state must often be found, to whom the salary of office would be no object. Such a feeling ought, on principle, to be cultivated; while at the same time, the Crown should not be prevented from looking elsewhere for aid if necessary,—should not be deprived of calling into its service those talents which might be found placed in less fortunate circumstances in the community. He should be sorry to see the Crown restricted in the privilege of benefiting by the talents of any of these classes, whether by being excluded from the choice of servants among the less wealthy ranks, or—which he would be still more sorry for—by being tied down to the aristocracy, to the exclusion of whatever abilities might offer themselves in other quarters. His conclusion therefore was, that it was a wise principle to keep the salaries of high and efficient officers at a comparative low rate; and whenever great services had been received, and want of adequate means the result to the individual or his family, to come down to Parliament, once, perhaps, in a quarter of a century, to make an appeal for the payment of the debts of some minister like Mr. Pitt, or some provision for the family of such a man as Mr. Canning. This was an infinitely more economical course, than any project for raising the salaries of officers of state, which would entail a permanent and fixed expense to the nation. Instances would often occur when, as at present in the case of the Minister for Foreign Affairs,* or in that of the late Secretary of State for the Home Department,† salary would be nothing.

* The Earl of Dudley.

† The Marquis of Lansdowne.

These distinguished persons having always large establishments, would have to incur, in consequence of official station, little or no additional expenditure. Many persons who had filled office received more than their official salary as the reward for their services. Lord Grenville, for instance, had received other rewards besides the salary attached to the office, which he had filled with so much honour to himself, and so much advantage to the country. He mentioned this, for the purpose of showing that his honourable friend was not borne out in his argument on that point, by a reference to facts. The better and more economical course would be, not to augment salaries, but to leave the door open for any special case like the present, which Parliament might think proper to consider.

Another charge of his honourable friend was, that Mr. Canning had expended a large sum of the public money, for fitting up his private residence. Now he did not know the amount laid out upon the office in Downing-street; but he knew that, with the extension of the business of the Foreign Office, it had become necessary to enlarge the building; and when the expediency and value of personal residence were evident, and when it was considered that, in that neighbourhood it was not easy to obtain a house, with suitable accommodations for maintaining the scale of hospitality which the office required, he thought it not too much, that some expense should be incurred to secure such a public object; but he must repeat, that that expense could not have amounted to any thing like the sum mentioned by his honourable friend, in the way in which he had put it.

His honourable friend had said that, instead of the country being a debtor to Mr. Canning for his services, she was his creditor on account of the expenditure of which he had been the cause, and which had taken place in the foreign department while he was in office; and his honourable friend had told them to look to Portugal, to Greece, and to the passage of the Pruth by the Russians. Now, every honourable member must see the unfairness,—for he could not call it by a milder name,—of discussing such questions on the present occasion. Standing there as a minister of the Crown, and a colleague of the late Mr. Canning, willing as he was to encounter all the responsibility of those measures upon which his honourable friend opposite had passed such a sweeping condemnation, and ready as he was, on the fit occasion, to enter upon the defence of those measures, he would confess he felt, and sure he was it was a feeling in which the House participated, that it was exceedingly unfair to introduce such a subject into this discussion. This much he would say to his honourable friend,—that the expedition to Portugal was sent out with the concurrence of every Minister who then sat in the Cabi-

net, and that the measure had been approved of in another House, by the illustrious Duke who now presided over his Majesty's Councils. He would say more,—that the expedition was sent out to defend the oldest ally of this country against foreign machinations and aggression,—that that was the sole, entire, and definite purpose for which it was sent there; and that it had completely accomplished that purpose. The independence of Portugal had been preserved. She had been secured against foreign invasion, and those dangers had been dissipated, against which they had been called upon, by the faith of treaties and by the policy of this country, to provide. Nevertheless, his honourable friend would render Mr. Canning's memory responsible for the expenses of this expedition—he would charge the purse of his family, if he could—and he would, if it were in his power, call upon them to pay for that expedition with their last shilling. Nay, his honourable friend would go still further, and charge upon the memory of Mr. Canning that folly and infatuation which evil counsels had produced, in the instance of the Prince Regent of Portugal.

But the Russians, forsooth, had passed the Pruth! and, according to his honourable friend, it was quite just that Mr. Canning should be held responsible for that likewise. The present was not the time to discuss the questions growing out of the present state of things in the east of Europe; but he did not anticipate any such direful consequences to this country from them, as his honourable friend seemed to apprehend. Nevertheless, let the consequences be what they might, he would tell his honourable friend, that but for the policy of Mr. Canning, the passage of the Pruth would have been effected long since, and under circumstances by no means so favourable to this country, as those under which it had now occurred.

His honourable friend had alluded to the force in the Mediterranean, and had laid the expenditure and the occurrences there at the door of Mr. Canning. Did his honourable friend never hear that the Mediterranean had been infested by numerous pirates?—that the commerce of all nations, and particularly British commerce, had suffered severe losses in consequence of their depredations? It was to put down that system of piracy that the force had been sent out to the Mediterranean; and no blame could attach to his lamented friend, or to those who concurred with him in the policy of sending out that force, if a shock had afterwards taken place, which had never been anticipated, as one of the consequences of those instructions which Mr. Canning, in the discharge of his duty to the country and the Crown, had prepared.

The next point to which his honourable friend had adverted, was one upon which it was desirable that no discussion should

have been provoked. His noble friend, who had addressed the House with so much eloquence and feeling, had adverted to the delay which had taken place in bringing forward this proposition. Now, he could assert, that there did not exist in the late Administration, any indisposition to consider the claims of the family of Mr. Canning; and he could positively say, that in the present Administration there prevailed one unanimous concurrence in the present proposition, and that the delay which had taken place was not to be attributed to any desire on their part to defeat the object of the proposition. All personal feelings had been laid aside, when this question came to be considered by them. All angry passions were for the time forgotten, and they approached the consideration of the question as public men, looking only to the circumstances which had reference to the public services of the man, and the loss which his family had sustained by his death. In this they imitated the great example of Mr. Fox, who at a period when the finances of the country were greatly embarrassed, notwithstanding the many angry and violent encounters which had taken place between them in Parliament, was amongst the foremost to support the bill for the payment of the debts of Mr. Pitt, and, with the characteristic virtue of great men, laid aside all recollections of the differences which had prevailed between him and his lost rival.

He felt that he had already trespassed too long on the attention of the House. He would, however, say this of Mr. Canning,—that, during the course of a long parliamentary life, he had known all the great men who, for the last twenty-five years, had served their country, and that he never knew one of them who had exceeded Mr. Canning in the exclusion of every thing of self, when concerned in the discharge of public duties. In his anxiety to discharge those duties, he was regardless of all other considerations. His desire for power arose from his love of fame; and his constant exertions, while in power, were directed to the advancement of the fame of his country. Animated with these feelings, he had lighted up that flame in the Peninsula which has blazed throughout Europe, and had at last restored the peace of the continent. The same feelings influenced him in the latter part of his career—the same desire still animated his breast, to promote the good and to advance the greatness of his country. The anxiety which he exhibited, and the incessant exertions which he devoted to the accomplishment of that great object, destroyed a frame which had been otherwise robust, and caused his premature decease—too soon, alas! for his country, though not for his own fame. He last saw his lamented friend in the month of July. His health was then drooping—his strength was gone, and his frame was fast sinking to decay; but his spirit was still as young as

ever, and his enthusiasm in the cause of his country knew no bounds. If his lamented friend had errors, they were the errors of a great mind. In none of the illustrious men who had yielded themselves up to the calls of public duty, had he seen the same devotedness of soul to the cause of the country, which had been uniformly exhibited by Mr. Canning, with the exception of Nelson, and, as their feelings were similar, so their fate was the same; for both had fallen in the service of their country. If departed spirits retained the feelings which animated them in their earthly sojourn, sure he was that those kindred spirits were still pervaded with the desire for England's fame and England's greatness. That was the all-pervading ambition which influenced the public conduct of Mr. Canning, and it was on that account that he called on the House to adopt the present motion. His honourable friend opposite had calculated what he reckoned Mr. Canning to have cost the country, and had estimated it at sixty thousand pounds. No doubt his honourable friend had discharged what he conceived to be a public duty, in opposing this proposal; but gladly would the family of Mr. Canning relinquish more than sixty thousand pounds, if they could have restored to them that parent who had fallen a sacrifice to his devotion to his country.

The committee divided: For the motion, 161. Against it, 54.

AMERICAN TARIFFS.

JULY 18th, 1828.

Mr. HUSKISSON said, that in submitting the motion of which he had given notice, he begged to assure his right honourable friends on the Treasury bench, that nothing could be farther from his intention than to elicit from the Government any premature disclosure of their views and sentiments, in reference to the conduct of the United States, as bearing on the commerce and industry of this country. Neither was it his intention to state any specific opinion of his own on a subject of so much importance, though he felt it necessary to take some notice of, he would not say the intention, but the tendency of the acts which had lately been passed by the legislature of the United States: which he considered mainly detrimental to their own interests, and calculated to injure and impede the commerce of this country. Seeing the many other urgent matters that must have engaged the attention of Government, and looking especially to the circumstances attending the situation of the department to which the consideration of these subjects peculiarly belonged, it could not be expected that they had yet been able to give to the new American Tariffs all the consideration which their importance deserved. In 1815, very soon after the termination of the unfortunate war in which we had been engaged with the United States, a convention of commerce was entered into between the two countries for four years. This convention was renewed in 1818. The principle on which it was framed was very short and simple. It was one of those treaties which had been since so much abused, under the name of reciprocity treaties, and was the model on which other treaties were subsequently constructed. The principle was, that all articles of produce, trade, or manufactures, should be received in either country, on the payment of duties as low as were paid on the same articles by any other country; and that there should be no discriminating duty, with respect to the ships in which they were imported. This treaty or convention was concluded for ten years, and would expire on the 10th of October in the present year.

The policy of the United States was at first sound and wise, and they had only laid on articles imported for the consumption of their population, such duties as were sufficient to provide for

the exigencies of the state. The duties on the woollens of this country were 15 per cent., and those on our hardware and our cotton goods were even lower. In 1823, whilst the convention was still binding on both countries, they, strange to say, adopted a change in their tariff, imposing much higher duties on those articles which they considered the great staples of our manufacture. Hardware was taxed thirty and forty per cent.; cotton about the same; and, as if to give a proof of their intention deliberately to violate the existing convention, they raised the duty on rolled iron one-half higher than that on hammered iron; thus taxing even our improvements in machinery. Upon a remonstrance from this country, the executive government admitted, much to its credit, that no such increase of duty ought to be imposed, nor any duty laid on, in reference to the expedition with which it was forged.

Subsequently, an attempt was made to induce us again to enter into a commercial convention for another term of ten years. He had been the individual charged with arranging the renewal of the convention; and in the course of the discussions, he had taken two objections to such renewal. The first, that as the Congress had taken this course with the iron, there was nothing to prevent it from doing the same with the other articles of our exports to the United States; for instance, cotton goods;—that, in fact, if at all admitted, the principle would go to deprive us—a great manufacturing country—of all the benefit of our improvements in machinery. The second objection was, that the scale of duties on other articles had been attempted to be increased in 1824, 1825, and 1826, and was only rejected by the casting-vote of the President. He therefore proposed, that the parties should not be bound to a term of ten years, but should conclude a new convention determinable at any period, provided twelve months notice were given by either party. This convention, leaving the two countries comparatively unfettered, was concluded last August. Whilst iron, cotton, and hardware, were rendered liable to duties which almost amounted to a prohibition, being the staples of this country, the productions of other countries were, in the same proportion, lowered; evidently showing an intention to injure, if not altogether to ruin, the extensive trade carrying on by this country in articles of its own manufacture. The fatal vote of this year was carried by as small a majority as it was lost by in the preceding year; and the best-informed Americans candidly confessed, that they felt this conduct to be extremely unwise and impolitic. Be that as it might, each country had a right to do in this respect as it liked, and we had no right to complain. He for one made no remonstrance as to the principle; but we had the remedy within ourselves. He was, however, not disposed to

enter on a war of restrictions or prohibitions in commerce. He deeply regretted what had been done in this respect; yet a man must be blind to the interests of this country, who should consent to deprive Government of the means of promptly meeting the effect of such restrictive measures by corresponding regulations here. If we were not in a condition to vindicate ourselves, there was at once an end of all equality; nor could we account satisfactorily to other countries, with whom we were still allowed to trade on fair terms of reciprocity, for this tame endurance in injury. Neither was it consistent with the dignity of a great commercial nation like this, to sit in apathy and affect not to feel the impediments thrown in the way of its commerce. If we were to take raw materials for our manufactures from the United States, we certainly should ensure for our articles, when manufactured from those materials, an equally favourable reception in the market as they experienced in other countries, not deriving in turn such considerable intercommercial advantages. Whilst we were dependent on that country for the raw material, were they to be encouraged and aided in their determination to be henceforth independent of our manufactured goods, of which they had till now required so large a supply? It was a more manly course, in order both to assert the character and protect the commerce of this country, to protest against a system framed for the unjust exclusion of our articles of manufacture. That system of commercial hostility he deeply regretted. There were two descriptions of articles imported into this country. Of the first class, such as tobacco, rice, and turpentine, he should speak as of articles which were not essential to our commerce or manufactures, and were mere articles of consumption. We could, he was satisfied, soon be abundantly supplied with tobacco from the East-Indies, by wise and prudent inducements held out to induce its improved cultivation. The rice of India would soon (indeed it was already doing so) usurp the place, in our list of imports, which that of Carolina had held. In other articles, the same change would soon be observed. With reference to cotton, that raw article so essential in our great staple trade, it was only necessary to give its culture in India the same encouragement and protection which the indigo trade had obtained, to ensure its cultivation with equal success, and the growth of as good, as durable, and as fine an article. The result would soon be, that the cotton of India would rival and supplant the cotton of the western world, as the indigo of India already excelled that of Guatemala, to which it was formerly so much inferior, and would still have continued so, but for the judicious encouragement afforded to it.

Unless we asserted our dignity and protected our interests,

what would be thought of us by the people of Brazil, who admitted all our articles of manufacture upon a payment of only fifteen per cent. ? What could we with consistency say to India, which was compelled to receive all our exports at a duty of 2½ per cent. on being landed in the ports of India, and had scarcely any staple wherewith to repay itself in the way of commerce with us ? What, in fact, could be our answer to the new states of South America ? This was an important consideration. But there was another ; which was, that if the United States pursued this course, and drove us to other countries for a supply now almost all their own, we should see that supply brought to this country in English bottoms and thus employing English industry, instead of, as it was now, employing American ships and seamen, and under the American flag. It was become a question of too great importance, any longer to be overlooked by any Government anxious to protect its commerce from the too palpable attempt to exclude the produce of English industry from the market of the United States. But was it to be supposed that the effort could be crowned with success ; or was it not right to infer, that if, circumstanced as our provinces in Canada were,—so large a country as the United States were prohibited from obtaining a legitimate supply, human industry and ingenuity would devise means of obtaining at a cheap rate, and without duty at all, that which was so superior in manufacture to any other they could obtain ? He should deeply regret if things turned into such an illicit channel, as it could hardly fail to increase the rivalry between the states bordering on the line of demarcation in North America, and possibly be productive of hostile feeling, and frequent personal rencontres. Strengthened as Government had felt itself by all these concurrent encouragements, it would not have become it to have acted otherwise than it did, with respect to the commercial convention last concluded. It appeared to him that the people of the United States had been led into an error, and induced to believe that we should have regarded all this with comparative apathy, as coming from themselves ; because this country had been so uniformly moderate and forbearing with an infant and rising state, connected with us so intimately by community of language and a common origin.

He thought that the present extent of our trade with America did honour to the spirit of enterprise in both countries ; but if America should persevere in the system disclosed in the tariff of this year, the day might arrive when the commerce between her and this country might become as restricted, and as insignificant, as that between us and France. The commerce of America with this country amounted to more than one half of the whole of her commercial transactions with the rest of the world ; but

our dealings with America, though conducted on such an extensive scale, did not amount to one-sixth of our general commerce. He would leave it to those who had an interest in the prosperity of that country, to say, whether they would risk the loss of more than half her trade in the vain endeavour to impede us in one-sixth of ours. The rapid increase of the cotton trade between America and this country was a proof, not only of the general prosperity of both, but of the increased comforts which were possessed by every class of our population. In the years 1817 and 1818, one half of the cotton manufactured in this country was consumed at home. As the quantity of the raw material had doubled in the course of ten years, the inference was obvious, that the quantity of manufactured cotton had more than doubled. That was a great improvement in so short a period; and it was the more important, as it indicated a corresponding increase in the comforts, and he might say the luxuries, of the people. He hailed it as an evidence of the advantages which a long peace was calculated to diffuse over the face of the earth, that in the whole of the civilized world, the comforts and advantages of society were rapidly increasing. He rejoiced to think that they were increasing in other countries as well as our own; for, as they increased, the wants of those countries would increase, with their wants commerce, and with commerce that beneficial intercourse which it must be the wish of every man to cultivate and encourage.

If the United States of America, by a fatal policy, should persevere in shutting out our commerce from her ports, it was absurd to suppose that she could annihilate that portion of our commerce. All she could do was to alter its course,—to send us into other ports of the same continent, to send us into Asia, and into the vast islands which covered the Asiatic seas.

To follow up the subject still further. He would say, that those gentlemen who, in another place, laboured with so much useless industry in the inquiry concerning the low price of English wool, were mistaken if they supposed that it was any proof of declining prosperity. The wool trade had decreased, because the cotton trade had increased. They were articles in competition with each other, and nothing could tend so much to raise the price of wool, as raising the price of American cotton. It was a satisfaction to know that the trade in foreign wool had increased. That was a fact which no man could deny, and as it was not accompanied with a corresponding increase in the export, it was decisive of an increase in the comforts of the people. The idea of laying an additional tax on foreign wool would be a species of madness, only equal to that which America would exhibit, by persevering in the system disclosed in the late tariff.

On looking at the fourth report of the Finance Committee, they would find that a great increase had taken place in the comforts, as well as in the productive powers of the industrious classes.

It was with regret that he should make any allusion to the differences between this country and America, in the year 1825. But, what had occurred at that period between the United States and the British colonies in the West-Indies? He had then proposed an act, throwing open the trade of those colonies, upon certain conditions, to other nations. The United States, however, so far from acting upon a principle of reciprocity, had imposed restrictions upon British shipping entering their ports, which amounted to complete exclusion. For one long year this country had patiently—he had almost said too patiently—submitted to the regulation, without adopting any retaliatory measure. At the end of that period, his Majesty was advised to issue an order in council prohibiting the intercourse between America and our West-India possessions. The intercourse was interdicted; and then came America, with a tardy proposal, accepting the terms which, up to the moment of the prohibition, this country had offered to her in vain. The advice for the issuing of that order in council was given with reluctance; but if they must again be driven to measures unfriendly to commercial intercourse, it became them to persist in it with firmness.

With respect to the present tariff, he would say to ministers,—“Do not be hasty to determine: look at the various bearings of the question, with a view to your interests, your character, and your trade.” But if, after such deliberation, they were forced to adopt a course of retaliation, all he would enjoin them was, that when once they had adopted the course, they should adhere to it with firmness. He would now move, “That there be laid before the House, a copy of the Tariff established in the United States of America, in the present year; together with a copy of their Tariff of the year 1824.”

The motion was agreed to.

EAST RETFORD DISFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

MAY 5th, 1829.

MR. TENNYSON moved for leave to bring in a Bill, "to exclude the Borough of East Retford from electing Burgesses to serve in Parliament, and to enable the town of Birmingham to return two representatives in lieu thereof." Mr. Nicholson Calvert expressed his anxiety, that the franchise should be transferred to the hundred of Bassetlaw, and Mr. Secretary Peel stated, that if the honourable member should move an amendment to that effect, it should have his support.

Mr. Huskisson rose and said* :—

From the settled aversion which I feel to every system of what is called parliamentary reform, I cannot say that I hail with much satisfaction any question which brings, even indirectly, that subject more or less under the review and discussion of this House. I am as far as any man from courting any thing which looks like a general revision of the Constitutional body : but when the existence of such abuses and general corruption as have been proved long and habitually to exist in the borough of East Retford are brought to light and exhibited in proof before us, we have no alternative but to apply some remedy to the specific evil. Further than this I shall never be prepared to go. I take my stand upon the aggregate excellence of our representative system, and I leave to others to take what delight they may in hunting out the anomalies of its detail, having no desire myself to join in that critical examination.

Without intending the slightest disrespect to the honourable members who have preceded me, I must say it does appear to me, that a great part of the debate of this evening would have been better applied to a stage of this measure which I understand to be now gone by. The honourable member for Corfe-Castle† has addressed his arguments to the House, as if it were now considering the effect of the evidence which was formerly taken, and not as if it were considering what the consequences are which ought to follow upon that evidence. The honourable gentleman says, that in the courts of law you cannot institute any proceed-

* From Mr. Huskisson's MS. Notes.

† Mr. George Banks.

ings to punish bribery and corruption, unless you do so within two years of the period when the parties were guilty of that bribery and corruption. This House, however, is not placed in that situation. It is not so restricted in its jurisdiction. It has, moreover, decided on a former occasion, that in the borough of East Retford there had been a gross, habitual, and long-continued state of corruption and bribery. The only question, therefore, which we have to discuss is, in what mode we shall deal with its forfeited franchise—whether we shall transfer it to some great commercial and manufacturing town, like Birmingham—whether we shall pursue the course which we pursued in the case of Grampound, when we transferred it to a county—or whether we shall retain this universally corrupt borough, and only endeavour to correct or countervail its corruption, by giving a concurrent right of voting to the freeholders of the adjacent hundred of Bassetlaw.

I have heard, Sir, with regret, and I must add with no small degree of surprise, the declaration made this evening by my right honourable friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, that the whole weight and authority of Government is to be put forth in support of the amendment of the honourable member for the county of Hertford. That, under such auspices, and backed by such power, it will be successful, I cannot doubt. I shall regret this success, because I cannot help thinking, that it will be at variance with the sentiments generally entertained by the sound and intelligent part of the community; I shall regret this success, because I am convinced, that it will increase, in the public mind, the feeling which already exists in favour of parliamentary reform; I shall regret this success, because I feel that it will ensure the adoption of a course, which must pave the way for a general parliamentary reform. When I say that I feel surprise, as well as regret at the course which they have adopted, I will tell his Majesty's ministers what is the ground of that surprise. I had persuaded myself, from the conduct which they have hitherto pursued during this session, and above all from the arguments by which they have vindicated that conduct, that they were not insensible to the march of events, and to the state and progress of public opinion in this country.

See, Sir, what that march and that progress have been! Two short years only have elapsed since the honourable and learned member for Winchelsea,* to the great surprise of the country, thought proper one day to quit the seat which he now occupies, and, crossing the floor of the House, to take another upon one of the upper benches behind the Treasury-bench. No sooner had

* Mr. Brougham.

this leader of a party in this House—for upon this occasion, he was followed by many others—effected this lodgment in an out-work, which had long been occupied and guarded by the steadiest and most tried of the troops of his opponents, than these veterans, one and all, were seized with a sudden panic—they fled and dispersed themselves in every direction, and in every part of the House. As soon as they had a little recovered from this state of breathless alarm, and had been able to talk it over among themselves, it was announced, that the foundation of all their fears was this—that the position taken by the honourable and learned gentleman implied a great change in the warfare of politics—that they inferred from the support which he was about to give to the other leader on this side of the House, that three most alarming consequences were to be expected—first, they saw in it the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts—secondly, they saw in it the settlement of the Roman Catholic question, and thirdly, they saw in it nothing less than parliamentary reform.

Well, Sir, to their great surprise, the campaign of 1827 closed without any of those positions being either assailed or carried. At the opening of the campaign of 1828, the honourable and learned leader had evacuated his post on this side of the House, and had returned to his former position. New leaders were appointed on this side—leaders of whom it might then be said, that had those situations been elective by those who had been thrown into such dismay last year, they would have been the objects of their unanimous choice, as the most approved champions to whom could be committed the defence of those two great bulwarks of the constitution, the Test Act and the Catholic code. In consequence, those tried and veteran troops resumed their former positions in the most entire—but, such is the uncertainty of all sublunary blessings, in a false and delusive—security. Whether the learned Leader, in crossing back to his former position, had left behind him the indefatigable chief of his staff, the famous "*Schoolmaster*," of whom he had often sounded the praise—by what arts he succeeded in winning over the chiefs and a great part of the garrisons—it will be the task of history to explore. The simple facts are, that one of those bulwarks was surrendered early in 1828, upon the first summons, and after a very feeble resistance; and that the second and more important fortress was surrendered at the opening of the present campaign, without even a summons, and upon conditions more favourable than any that had been offered, and offered in vain, by the succession of great commanders who had assailed it for the last five and twenty years.

I rejoice, Sir, at these surrenders; but Parliamentary Reform,

thank God, still remains to be resisted. There, I trust, the resistance will ever be firm—will ever be successful. But sure I am, that the means of successful resistance will be greatly strengthened by our adopting the advice of the honourable member for Blechingly*—that it will be greatly impaired by our acting upon the plan of the honourable member for the county of Hertford. Should the latter proposition be adopted, we shall see parliamentary reform, backed by a powerful auxiliary out of this House—I mean public opinion, and the power of the press—made an annual question of discussion.

It is, Sir, on grounds like these, that I am anxious to give my support to my honourable friend the member for Blechingly. I will not condescend to argue the question as one between the landed and the commercial interests of the country. It is to me matter of wonder, that any man should even suppose that the character of the House will be changed, by giving this franchise either to the hundred of Bassetlaw or to the town of Birmingham. I object to the distinction which some honourable members are drawing between the landed and the commercial interests. I contend, that the history of this country, and still more emphatically the history of Ireland, proves that it is on the co-operating industry and success of the commercial industry, that the prosperity of the landed interest mainly rests. Destroy the energies of commerce, and your land will soon fall into that unproductive state, in which it was before those great stimuli to improvement were created.

It has been stated, as a justification of the course which his Majesty's Government have determined to follow upon the subject of this bill, that the two Houses of Parliament are divided in opinion, as to the best mode of dealing with forfeited franchises, and that the present has been adopted, as forming a middle course, on which both can agree. I admit it to be true, that on the present question, the two Houses are divided in opinion. The House of Commons has shown by its votes on more than one occasion, that it is of opinion that the great manufacturing towns which are unrepresented, ought to send representatives to Parliament. It has sent up bills in which that opinion has been formally avowed. The other House has rejected them; and, up to this hour, both Houses seem firmly attached to their respective opinions. Indeed, I understand my right honourable friend the Home Secretary not to be unfriendly to the principle which I am supporting; and therefore I am the more surprised to find him supporting the amendment of the honourable member for Hertfordshire.

Sir, many of the reasons which prevailed with those who had

* Mr. Tennyson.

hitherto opposed Catholic concession, to give their support to it this year, would apply in the present case—here is the same division of opinion between the two Houses; here, too, the young are with us, and the parties who, upon principle, oppose all transfer to great towns are the same, of whom it was said in another place, by a right reverend prelate,* they must soon go to their account elsewhere—and here again, the public feeling out of doors is strong in favour of giving representatives to these great towns, and strongly against giving it to the particular hundred to which this borough is to be annexed. We were also told, during the late discussion on the Catholic claims, now so happily adjusted, that it was important to win all Protestants to our side, in order that we might, with greater effect, oppose any dangerous pretensions, if any such there should be, of the Roman Catholics. And is it nothing, I would ask, of importance, in the course of the various domestic questions which may hereafter arise on the subject of parliamentary reform, to win over to our side, Sir, not only public opinion, over which the press now exercises such powerful influence, but also those congregated masses of intellect and of wealth, which always exist in large commercial towns? Will it be nothing of importance, I would ask, that the population of Birmingham shall have been made content, by being gifted with the power to return members to represent them in Parliament?

I should have thought, Sir, and more especially after recent events and recent avowals, that this was an occasion to recollect those words of forecast and wisdom, which are somewhere to be found in the writings of Mr. Burke—"Early reforms are amicable arrangements with a friendly power; late reforms, capitulations with a conquering enemy." Is there no risk, Sir, that the measure which immortalizes the present session should appear hereafter an exemplification of this remark? Is it no drawback to an act of justice and grace, to have it exhibited as yielded to necessity, and as only a lesser evil than civil war? and if such a view of what we have done subtracts, on the one hand, from the value of the boon, does it add nothing, on the other hand, to the danger of the example? When the excitation of the late discussion shall have gone by—when the swell and rolling of the waters, after their late violent agitation, shall have subsided—that man must be little read in the history of human passions, or in the political history of free states, who can imagine that the people of this country, a sober, calculating, and observing people, or the people of Ireland, certainly quite as shrewd, though perhaps a little more mercurial in their character, will look at nothing but

* The Bishop of Oxford.

the mere change in the law, effected by what is called Catholic Emancipation, quite abstractedly from any recollection of the battles by which it has been won, of the mode and circumstances in which it was opposed for twenty-five years, and of the mode and circumstances and accompanying declarations, by which it was finally conceded; that they will look at the history of this question abstractedly of the influence which it has had upon party, upon the formation of and breaking up of administrations, and upon all the great events which have agitated the public mind in our time.

Sir, I say again—that man must be little read in human passions or political history, who supposes that some other leading question embodying the means of excitation, will not ere long take the place of the Catholic question; that new aspirations of ambition and distinction, will not arise; that feelings hitherto dormant will not be called into action; and that we shall not ere long be sensible of the vibration of strings which have hitherto remained untouched. Every thing connected with this question is hurrying us forward to good or evil, according to the direction which may be given to the stream. The present session, in fact, will become a new era in the history of the public power of this country. In this state of things, divisions between the House which represents the people and the Upper House ought to be carefully avoided as much as possible. Because you have most wisely and most fortunately stopped the principal crater of that immense volcano, which threatened Ireland with wide-spreading conflagration, are you to neglect to look into the recesses of those subterraneous caverns where the elements of fire must still be enkindling, and the latent springs of danger preserved with all their elastic force? You have stopped the great evil—you have laid the foundation of much good. But it is rather the preliminary than the actual completion of a work—rather the qualifying to enable us to begin, than the end and close of our labours. In the present state of society in Ireland—in the absence of poor laws for that country—(upon the policy or applicability of which I now pronounce no opinion)—in the want of adequate capital to afford employment to an impoverished race—in the comparative relation of landlord and tenant—in all the various ramifications arising out of such a disorganized state of things, much remains unsettled. There is much, very much to be done by the Parliament and the Government, and many duties to be performed, is the reconciliation of supposed adverse interests.

Now, Sir, is it possible to glance at the proximity of these difficult questions, without seeing how much they must be aggravated by the disfranchising of this borough of East Retford, for the mere purpose of transferring the franchise to the adjoining hundred of

Bassetlaw? My honourable friend, the member for Hertfordshire, was indeed so well convinced of this himself, and so entirely persuaded of the universal corruption which reigned throughout the borough, that, in his first bill, he proposed to disfranchise the whole of these corrupt voters *en masse*, and throw open the franchise to the county. He has since, however, forgetful of his first and juster intention, merely changed the form of election in the borough, and extended it to the hundred of Bassetlaw. [Mr. N. CALVERT.—“ You mistake. I did not bring in a bill of that specific description. I brought in two bills; one for the disfranchisement of those who were guilty of gross bribery and corruption; the other for transferring the franchise.”] Then, the tenderness displayed in the alteration is not justice, in the general principle which ought to govern such a case. It is creating, or rather superinducing, embarrassment where none previously existed; for the case originally, and indeed at present, is simply this:—we were, as the committee had left the subject upon the facts, at perfect liberty, more than parliament had been on any previous occasion, to disfranchise East Retford, and to carry the franchise so forfeited to any part of the country we thought proper. The moment that, upon just grounds, such a decision was come to, I know nothing in the history of the constitution, in the precedents of our former proceedings upon the like grounds, in the analogy of the decisions upon any cases appertaining to such principles, which attaches a preference in the transference to mere vicinity or proximity, rather than to any other part of the kingdom. This being the fact, whence, Sir, the policy of overlooking the claims of such a town as Birmingham, with a population of one hundred and forty thousand souls, to bring in some local hundred—with the palpable knowledge of Birmingham, the great quarter of a staple of the country—iron—being unrepresented in Parliament; at the same time knowing, likewise, Leeds, the great mart of the woollen trade, to be in the same state, and likewise Sheffield, the depository of the hardware trade? Is this a time, when such a question is raised, to decide, that Birmingham shall not be represented at all, and that a forfeited franchise shall be assigned to one of the hundreds which was represented directly by the county members, as well as indirectly by the borough members. So that in the hundred the electors are to have the exercise of the representative functions twice, and to have a two-fold capacity of returning members, while the large towns, with the great interests which I have named, are to be deprived of the chance of a single nomination. Ought any man in his right senses to hesitate as to the course which it is proper to adopt under such circumstances? If Birmingham ought to be represented at all, ought a question to be raised upon the alternative, whether such shall be

the case, or whether a hundred in the county, like Bassetlaw—one emphatically named in the local topography as “*The Dukery*,” shall have the chance of being directly represented? It is a matter of indifference to me in whom the nomination shall lie, in such a case; it is enough for me, upon the general principle, to know, that the county of Nottingham has now eight representatives, and that Warwickshire, the depository of great trading interests, has only six, with a population so much denser and more conflicting, and, under every circumstance, so very differently constituted.

Why, Sir, there has not been for a century so good an opportunity of remedying a state of things, arising out of the altered condition of society. It is unnecessary to go into the condition of these boroughs in Nottinghamshire, and the interests involved in them; nor do I mean to trench upon the principle of virtual representation. I am not arguing against that principle, when I seek for the settlement of the present question. But I contend, that if great and influential interests have silently grown up in the country, mixing private speculations with large public results, the principle of virtual representation becomes inapplicable to their immediate condition; and that, when a safe opportunity arises, their direct claims ought to be attended to. When the power of selection is pressed upon Parliament by any particular occurrence, what answer can be given to the claims of such a town as Birmingham, with trading interests largely mixed up in the general commercial bearings of the manufactures of the country? When such measures as the renewal of the Charter of the East-India Company, and that of the Bank of England, are in progress, is it to be said, that the people of a town like Birmingham have no greater interest in the result than those who reside in the hundred of Bassetlaw? Are they, at a time of such general and momentous considerations, to be consigned to a mere virtual representation, and refused the benefit of a just and seasonable opportunity of having a direct presence in the legislature? No class, in fact, more directly requires this aid than the people of Birmingham; who are now to be refused it, notwithstanding the eminent advantages which the country could not fail to derive from the pursuit of a different course. Indeed, when I survey those weighty interests, and the incalculable benefits that would result from the concession now called for, I cannot help appealing to my right honourable friends on the Treasury Bench, and recalling to them the apposite and beautiful quotation lately made by a noble friend in the other House,* at the head of the law, who repeated it as it was used by a great luminary of this House—

* Lord Lyndhurst.

Mr. Burke—when describing the benign effects which had resulted from the adjustment of the ill-proportioned representation of Wales,—“From that moment, as by a charm, the tumults subsided—obedience was restored; peace, order, and civilization followed in the train of liberty—when the day-star of the English Constitution had arisen in their hearts, all was harmony within and without.” By pursuing the policy of the act of Henry VIII. in the present case, the same happy consequences would follow—the same guarantee would be obtained for the loyalty of a patient and enduring people. These great advantages are now within your reach. Never before have you had an equal opportunity of effecting so desirable an object, so readily, and so quietly.

My honourable friend, the member for Hertfordshire, alluded to the boroughs in the west of England, and remarked how well they worked. Upon this point, I will offer nothing more than that I know enough of these matters to wish to avoid discussing them in detail. After all, Sir, the question is—has, in the particular instance before us, that degree of forfeiture been incurred by bribery which justifies the total disfranchisement of the borough? It is not necessary in the fulfilment of the principle which governs these transactions, that each individual shall, in the pursuit of what he conceived to be his private interest, have violated his public trust; it is enough to show, that the general corruption is so notorious in the body exercising the franchise, that they do not deserve to be invested with public rights. Their franchise becomes, in such a case, vitiated. In fact, there is no other way of dealing with the principle. We must act upon the general condition of the place.

I know, Sir, that in enforcing these opinions I am exposing myself to the repetition of the imputation of having been of late governed very much by revolutionary theories. I have been charged by some, whose esteem and good-will I greatly value, as having, in matters of commerce, as well as in those of the general policy of the country, been too prone to alterations, and as being the author in some instances, and the promoter in others, of innovations of a rash and dangerous nature. I deny the charge. I dare the authors of it to the proof. I am ready to join issue with them, whenever it is brought forward in a substantive, tangible, and intelligible shape. For the present, I will content myself with reminding those gentlemen, when they talk of the dangers of innovation, that they ought to remember, with Lord Bacon, “that Time has been and is the great Innovator.” Upon that Innovator, I have felt it my duty cautiously to wait, at a becoming distance, and with proper circumspection; but not arrogantly and presumptuously to go before him, and endeavour to outstrip his course. Time has raised these great interests; and

it is the business of a statesman to move onwards with the new combinations which have grown around him.

This, Sir, is the principle by which my feelings have been constantly regulated during a long public life, and by which I shall continue to be governed, so long as I take any part in the public affairs of this country. It is well said, by the most poetical genius, perhaps, of our own times—

“A thousand years scarce serve to form a state,
An hour may lay it in the dust”—

This is the feeling which has regulated—which will continue to regulate—my conduct. It was by a reference to it, that I governed myself in the great measure which has recently occupied the attention of Parliament; verily believing that if, in an evil hour, the Government had resolved upon a permanent, uncompromising system of resistance to the Catholic claims, they would have gone far to illustrate in this country the last words of the quotation—“An hour may lay it in the dust.”

I claim, therefore, for myself, that I have never been one of those who think that, in order to warrant any change in the established policy of the state, it is sufficient to show that the change is in accordance with natural rights, or founded upon some general principle, the abstract truth of which cannot be denied. At the same time, I do not mean to deny, that when we come to that which is the practical duty of statesmen,—to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of one course of proceeding against another, and to make our choice between them,—it will generally be found that the balance will incline on the side of justice and of sound principle. But I go no further. I am no advocate for changes upon mere abstract theory. I know not, indeed, which is the greatest folly—that of resisting all improvement, because improvement implies innovation—or that of referring every thing to first principles, and to abstract doctrines. The business of the practical man is to make himself acquainted with facts—to watch events—to understand the actual situation of affairs, and the course of time and circumstances, as bearing upon the present state of his own country and the world.

These are the grounds by a reference to which his reason and judgment must be formed—according to which, without losing sight of first principles, he must know how to apply them, and to temper their inflexibility. This is the task of practical legislation. We cannot frame new laws, or change those under which we have hitherto lived, without a reference to the situation of the country, and to all the circumstances in which we are placed. But neither, as some appear to imagine, can we stand still, whilst

those circumstances are changing, and every thing around us is in motion.

Now, Sir, the surest way to prevent rash and dangerous innovation is to stop that course of vacillation, which temporising and incomplete measures are sure to create. In every thing which I have said, I beg the House to bear in mind, that I am not pressing for the adoption of any theory, unknown to the constitution; but, on the contrary, enforcing the practical application of a very old principle, and endeavouring to show how completely it is in unison with it, that means should be taken, safely and without forcing the occasion, to provide for the wants of those great towns, which have grown up under peculiar circumstances, and which call for a course of treatment, more consistent with their exigencies than the one now provided for them.

The House divided. For the motion, 111; against it, 197. Majority against bringing in the bill, 86. Mr. Huskisson voted with the minority.

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MR. HUSKISSON'S EXPOSITION OF THE STATE OF
BRITISH POLITICAL AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS
WITH MEXICO.

MAY 20th, 1830.

In pursuance of his notice, that he would this day present a petition from Liverpool, respecting the present state of our political and commercial relations with Mexico,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose and said ;—

The petition, Sir, which I now rise to present, is one which, in my judgment, connects itself with interests and considerations of the highest importance to this country. I trust that this will afford some apology for me, if I venture upon this occasion to detain the House longer than is usual, or, generally speaking, acceptable, upon the presentation of petitions. The petitioners are that portion of the merchants of Liverpool, who are engaged in dealings and commercial intercourse with the State of Mexico. In substance, their petition is entirely in accordance with the representations which have been made to this House by other great trading and manufacturing communities—Glasgow, Manchester, London, and other places, whose pursuits give them an equal interest in the condition of the New States of America. The petition states that, since Mexico became independent, its trade with this country has increased; that it now forms a very important item of our foreign commerce, and that it is susceptible, under favourable circumstances, of a still greater increase; that it has, however, unfortunately been exposed to various interruptions, losses, and uncertainties, in consequence of occasional enterprises undertaken against Mexico from Cuba, and that these enterprises have been the cause of considerable disorders in Mexico, and of expense and losses, which fall mainly upon neutral commerce. The petitioners further state that, last summer, an expedition was despatched from Cuba, which entailed great losses upon British subjects, and they add, that they have reason to believe that other expeditions of a similar nature are fitting out. Such are some of the statements contained in the petition.

Of the magnitude and importance of the objects at stake there cannot be two opinions. When we look at the extent and pecu-

liar productions of the Mexican territory—at its actual population—a population now amounting to nearly seven millions, and capable of being greatly increased—a population not our rivals in shipping or manufactures, but able and willing to afford us the mineral productions of their country, in return for our goods, to the great encouragement of our trading and shipping interests—it will appear to all that we are deeply interested in the tranquillity, welfare, and prosperity of Mexico. Upon the value of our political connexion with that country—upon the importance of its being able to maintain itself in a state of entire and secure independence—I will not now expatiate, though I shall have occasion to notice this consideration before I sit down. The petitioners pray the House, “to adopt measures to protect their interests, and induce Spain to desist from such expeditions, or else to prevent them, as they can only terminate in disgrace and loss to herself, and injury to other parties connected with Mexico.” There are two questions which naturally arise from considering this prayer. First, have we the right, or rather have we not incurred the obligation, to interfere for the purpose of preventing the attacks of Spain upon the New States, at least attacks proceeding from Cuba? Secondly, if we have not incurred that peculiar obligation, have we not, nevertheless, a general right, in common with all maritime neutral states, or I might say in common with all civilized nations, to insist upon a suspension of hostilities between Spain and her late colonies on the continent of America—I say, “a suspension of hostilities,” because, whilst I shall contend that neutral nations have that right, I fully admit that they cannot carry it further, and that the time and mode of recognition is a question for Spain, and not for them to determine.

First, in respect to our peculiar obligation to prevent attacks from Cuba, I will state, as I understand them, the facts and circumstances which bear upon this question. Late in the year 1824, or I believe in the beginning of 1825, when this country had recently recognized Colombia and Mexico as independent powers, those States, being belligerents against Spain, thought proper, with a view to prevent attacks upon their own territories, to concert an attack on the island of Cuba. On the part of Mexico, a very considerable body of forces assembled at Campeachy, under the command of General Santa Anna, the same to whom General Barradas surrendered last autumn. Colombia, had collected her naval forces at Carthagena, and had brought down some of her best troops for the purpose of aiding in a descent on Cuba. At that time the island thus menaced was weakly garrisoned, and such a feeling prevailed amongst the inhabitants, as rendered it probable that it might separate itself from the mother country, if opportunity and encouragement were afforded.

When I recollect that at the period in question the two powers—Mexico and Colombia—possessed great financial and other resources, joined with high credit, it is only reasonable to conclude that the attempt upon Cuba, if made, would have been successful. But the matter does not rest upon my conjecture or my authority; I shall quote the authority of an individual, whose official station in the Government of the United States gave him the most ample means of information—means, of which, doubtless, he made the best use, as his country was deeply interested in the question. The authority to which I allude is contained in a letter addressed by Mr. Clay, then Secretary of State, to one of the ministers of the United States in Europe, and dated the 10th of May 1823, from which the following is an extract:—"The success of the enterprise is by no means improbable. Their (Colombia and Mexico) proximity to the islands (Cuba and Porto Rico), and their armies being perfectly acclimated, will give to the united efforts of the republics great advantages. And if with these be taken into the estimate, the important and well-known fact, that a large portion of the inhabitants of the island is predisposed to a separation from Spain, and would, therefore, form a powerful auxiliary to the republican arms, their success becomes almost certain."

In a subsequent letter, written in the same year, Mr. Clay says,—"The fall of the castle of Saint Juan de Ulloa, which capitulated on the 18th day of last month, cannot fail to have a powerful effect within that kingdom (Spain). We are informed that when information of it reached the Havannah, it produced great and general sensation; and that the local government immediately dispatched a fast-sailing vessel to Cadiz to communicate the event, and, in its name, to implore the King immediately to terminate the war and acknowledge the new republics, as the only means of preserving Cuba to the monarchy."

I believe, that it would not have been preserved but for the interposition of the United States and his Majesty's Government, which both directed their efforts, though acting without concert, and upon a view of their own separate interests, to prevent the severing of Cuba from the Crown of Spain. The meditated attack naturally excited uneasiness in this country and in the United States. The position of Cuba induced America to interpose, for the purpose of persuading the New States to abandon the expedition; and Mr. Canning on the part of the British Government, had, I doubt not (although no official record of the fact appears to have been preserved in the records of the Foreign Office), an interview with the Mexican and Colombian ministers on the subject. Mr. Canning is understood to have explained to those individuals the feelings of pain and regret with which Eng-

land viewed the progress of the expedition; and to have added, that we should not be indifferent to any event that might tend to disturb the tranquillity of Cuba. I have a general recollection that the ministry of this country did thus interpose, and I feel bound to say, that those who advised his Majesty at that period would have been guilty of a great oversight and neglect of duty, if they had not endeavoured to prevent an attempt, which, by making Cuba the theatre of a civil war, a war in which the black population would almost inevitably have taken a part, might not only have endangered the safety of the most valuable colony of Great Britain, but would, in its results, have exposed to great hazard the state of peace now happily existing between all the great maritime powers of the world.

It is probable that Mr. Canning urged as a further motive for forbearance on the part of Mexico and Colombia, that they would thereby place this country in a better situation to mediate and call upon Spain to listen to propositions of amity and conciliation as between her and her late colonies. But, be that as it may, these states were clearly inclined at the time (as their conduct showed) to receive with the greatest deference the expression of the wishes of this country. They relied with a reverential confidence on our friendly disposition towards them, and on our sincere desire to consult and promote their happiness. I am sorry to perceive that an impression has since arisen in some quarters, that we now repent ourselves of our former generosity towards these states, and that we are rather ashamed of our new connexions: however, I am convinced that the opinion has no foundation whatever in truth. I am convinced that it is impossible for this country, after all that has occurred, not to entertain the greatest anxiety for the welfare, prosperity, and general tranquillity of the new governments. It was under the influence of such a feeling that his Majesty was advised to recognise those states, and I am sure that the same favourable feeling still exists. But to return from this digression: in consequence of the interposition of England and America, the republics desisted from their enterprise, which they totally abandoned, notwithstanding the expense that had been incurred in preparations, and sent their troops into the interior. Four or five years have elapsed since this interposition on our part, and during that time the ministers of the New States, I am assured, have more than once inquired whether the same principles of interposition continued, in the event of an attack upon Cuba being meditated. They were told that our objections to an attack still continued in full force. During these four or five years what has Spain been doing? She has been employed in recruiting her forces, and adding to her resources: availing herself of the advantage of having her towns garrison-

ed and her police managed by the troops of a foreign power, she was enabled to unite her forces at Cuba for the purpose of attacking and endeavouring to recover her ancient colonies.

Land forces and a marine having been collected, an expedition proceeded in the month of August last from the Havannah against Mexico. I would ask, was the British Government apprised of this expedition? And I should like to know whether we made any remonstrance against it? Did Ministers say to Spain—"As we protected Cuba from the republics, we feel bound not to allow Cuba to be made the rendezvous of expeditions intended for the attack of those States? If ministers did not act in this way, at least, they have not fulfilled the obligations of a strict and impartial neutrality; and, if such remonstrances were made, I am sorry to say that they have not been attended to by Spain, which, in this respect, acted differently from the New States of South America. The expedition, which seems to have been projected under the mistaken impression that the inhabitants of the republics would declare in favour of Spain upon the arrival of a Spanish armament, sailed from Cuba and landed without opposition on the continent, where they remained some time before a force could be collected to attack them. During all this time they were not joined by a single Mexican, and the inhabitants did not even supply them with provisions: eventually, they were obliged to lay down their arms.

I have no difficulty in saying, that it must be the wish of every maritime power in Europe, (and of England above all others, as being the greatest maritime and commercial nation in the world,) that Cuba should remain tranquilly and peaceably in the possession of Spain, as I hope it will. It must, therefore, be the wish of all, but more especially of this country, that none of those occurrences out of which maritime contests might arise, should take place; and upon this ground I am justified in saying, that Cuba ought not to be allowed to become the point from which expeditions should proceed to attack Mexico or Colombia.

When, early in the session, this subject was brought before the House by my gallant friend opposite,* the right honourable Secretary for the Home Department said, that England would thenceforward observe between the belligerents the most careful and strict impartiality. If the right honourable gentleman meant by impartiality that, as we were not able to prevent the attacks of Spain upon her ancient colonies from Cuba, we would now remove our interdict, and allow the States of Mexico and Colombia to attack Cuba in their turn, such an impartiality is no better than mockery. To be impartial, we must place the parties as they

*Sir Robert Wilson.

stood in 1825, or, if we cannot do that—and there is no question that we cannot—our only mode of proceeding is, to put Cuba under the same interdict as regards warlike expeditions against the New States, as that which we imposed upon them with respect to armaments directed from their shores against Cuba. Although at the present moment it is impossible for the New States to attack Cuba, yet, in the course of the war, if it be continued, the tables may be turned, and perhaps they will be in a situation to do so. If so, in all probability, our impartiality will be again at fault, and we shall feel it necessary to protect Cuba, as we have done before.

Taking the matter in another light,—Spain is a belligerent. As long as she continues so, her possessions—Cuba or any other—are exposed to all the hazards of war; there is no preventing this risk upon any fair principle. Neither is this the only danger to which the continuance of war exposes that most valuable possession of the Spanish monarchy. Recollect what occurred at Cadiz in 1820. Is there no danger in having a large body of Spanish troops collected in the island of Cuba? Is there no danger of feelings of dissatisfaction being created among those who have to support the troops? Is there no danger of consequences at the Havannah similar to those which were the result of a like assemblage at Cadiz, and which might afford a pretence for a foreign force taking possession of Cuba, as the mutiny at Cadiz led to the occupation of Spain by the armies of France? Under such circumstances, the best interests of all parties should induce Spain to put an end to the warfare altogether, or at least to consent that the island of Cuba should be excepted from its operations. Let it continue exempt from attack; but then it must not be made the means of aggression. If this principle be once established and acted on, we shall have made great progress towards the termination of hostilities.

But I do not stop here. I maintain that it is consistent with every principle of the law of nations, that Spain should now be required to put an end to this useless war. This is not only an abstract right recognized by all the great authorities upon international law, but a right, the practical enforcement of which, in the present instance, it becomes the duty, as much as it is the interest, of other States to concert together. Seven years have elapsed since Spain held one foot of soil in the New States; seven years are the ordinary period of what is even considered a long war, but here the combat has been protracted for one-and-twenty. It is now nearly seven years since, in the Minute of an official conference between Mr. Canning and Prince Polignac, we find it recorded, that the contest was utterly hopeless, and that the irreversible course of events had finally decided the separation

of Spain from her former colonies. When a contest becomes altogether hopeless, and the object of it, however just in its origin, is admitted on all hands to be unattainable, the interests of humanity require it to be terminated; because war in the abstract, and of itself, is too great an evil to admit of its being continued indefinitely, to gratify the spite or animosity of individuals. But if this be a general principle, founded upon the exercise of what writers upon the law of nations would call "an imperfect right," in neutral states, the application of this principle becomes infinitely more imperative, when the essential interests of those neutral states, and eventually, perhaps, the preservation of peace and harmony between themselves, are involved. This is the habitual practice of nations.

What did we do with respect to Greece? Did we not interpose, by the treaty of the 6th of July 1827, when the civil war between Turkey and Greece had been carried on only four or five years? Even after so short a period of hostilities, feeling the ill effects of piracy and other interruptions to commerce, the great powers of Europe considered that they had abundant reason to interpose. Have there been no piracies, and those of the most atrocious character, in the Gulf of Mexico? Has no injury been inflicted on British commerce, in consequence of the protracted struggle between Spain and her late colonies? Why, Sir, so far back as in 1822, we were even on the point of issuing letters of reprisal for the injuries done to British commerce. However, a treaty was signed with Spain, guaranteeing remuneration for our losses; and after a lapse of nine or ten years, I believe we have at length obtained about thirty or forty per cent. of their amount. Is any Gentleman prepared to say, that a war involving and compromising such interests is to be permitted to continue, till the States of Mexico and Colombia shall cease to assert their independence, or Spain be disposed to acknowledge it? If such a principle be propounded and recognised, the war may be interminable.

I know that in the State Paper to which I have alluded, Mr. Canning said, he should observe a strict neutrality in the contest. This declaration necessarily assumed that, every legitimate object of the war being at an end, the war itself would not be indefinitely continued. This, in reason and common sense, is the prescriptive term of every war, and at that term the present contest has long since arrived. To argue otherwise, would be to admit, that a war once begun between two belligerents might be interminable, whatever were the evils and dangers with which it threatened third parties.

The wise policy of Spain would be frank and unreserved recognition;—would be conciliation, and the revival, for the mutual

benefit of both parties, of those sentiments of kindred and common origin, which twenty years of warfare may have weakened, but have not eradicated. These, however, are matters for her own consideration. If, from mistaken pride, or from a false sense of dignity, she will not enter into relations of amity with the New States, she is the mistress of her own feelings, and it is our duty to respect those feelings. All that we have a right to require is a truce to the useless evils of war. To grant such a truce can be no disparagement to the crown of Spain. The monarch of the present day would only be acting upon a principle of which the annals of Spain, in the prouder days of her power, furnish the example. In 1609, after a struggle of many years duration with her revolted provinces in the Netherlands—a struggle in which torrents of blood had been shed, and civil war had raged in its fiercest character, Spain consented to a truce for twelve years; though it was not till the year 1648 that she entered into a regular treaty of peace with those provinces, by which she, for the first time, recognised them as an independent sovereign state. Let the present government of Spain grant a truce for twelve years, and I, for one, shall be then satisfied to wait her own leisure for the period of their recognition.

But, Sir, if there are great political interests which should induce us to endeavour to maintain to Spain her present sovereignty and possession of Cuba and Porto Rico, there are other political considerations which make it not less important—if possible, still more important—that Mexico should settle into a state of internal peace and tranquillity, and of entire and secure independence. If the United States have declared that they cannot allow the island of Cuba to belong to any maritime power in Europe, Spain excepted, neither can England, as the first of those maritime powers—I say it fearlessly, because I feel it strongly—suffer the United States to bring under their dominion a greater portion of the shores of the Gulf of Mexico than that which they now possess. Within the last twenty-seven years they have become masters of all the shores of that gulf from the Point of Florida to the river Sabine, including the mouths of the Mississippi and of other great rivers, the port of New Orleans, and the valuable and secure harbours of Florida; and, within these few days, we hear of their intention of forming a naval station and arsenal at the islands of the Dry Tortugas, a commanding position in the Gulf-stream between Florida and Cuba. With all this extent of coast and islands, we know, further, that designs are entertained, and daily acted upon—I will not say by the present government of the United States, but, notoriously, by the people—to get possession of the fertile and extensive Mexican province of Texas. To borrow an expression of a deceased statesman of that country,

"the whole people of America have their eye" upon that province. They look to all the country between the river Sabine and the river Bravo del Norte as a territory that must, ere long, belong to their union. They have also, I believe, that same eye upon some of the western coast of Mexico, possessing valuable ports in the Gulf of California. Should they obtain these districts, the independence of Mexico, I will venture to say, will be no better, or more secure, than that of the Creek Indians, or any other Indian tribe now living within the circle of the present recognised limits of the United States; and the Gulf of Mexico will become as much a part of their waters as the Black Sea was once of the waters of Turkey, or as the channel which separates England from Ireland may be considered as part of the waters of the United Kingdom.

I may be told, Sir, that these are visionary alarms, contemplating schemes of aggrandizement and ambition which never have been, and probably never will be, entertained in any quarter. At this moment, I willingly admit that there exists a friendly disposition in the government of the United States, and I cannot doubt that his Majesty's Government fully reciprocates that disposition. Upon every account I am glad to see these two powerful States living upon terms of honourable and mutual confidence, each relying upon the peaceful councils of the other. But it is not to be imputed to me that I am undervaluing this good understanding, or that I am guilty of want of respect towards the United States, or even of discretion as an individual Member of Parliament, if, on this occasion, I do not lose sight of those circumstances of a permanent nature which belong to the fixed policy of the United States, and to those motives of action which, however dormant at present, would probably be revived, under contingencies that, in the course of events, may hereafter arise,—contingencies, which the views and passions of the American people would not fail to turn to account for the attainment of a long-cherished and favourite object.

At all periods of our history, the House of Commons has held topics of this nature to be fair grounds of Parliamentary consideration. Jealousy, for instance, of the aggrandizement of the House of Bourbon has always been held an element entitled to enter into every general discussion affecting the balance of power in Europe; and I am sure there is nothing in the general character of democratic republics, or in the past conduct of the United States, from which we can infer, that their aspirations after power and aggrandizement are less steadily kept in view than those of an absolute monarch in Europe. In looking to the future, let us consult the experience of the past. But, in the case of the New World, we have something more than the history of the

last thirty years to guide our judgment. The views and sentiments of those who, during that period, have directed or influenced the affairs of the United States, have been brought before us by the publication of their Correspondence. I am afraid the living statesmen of this country have scarcely had time to make themselves acquainted with those views and sentiments, as they stand disclosed in the Memoirs and Correspondence of a deceased statesman of America, I mean the late Mr. Jefferson, a man who, from the period of their first declaration of independence,—a declaration of which he was the author,—to the close of his life, seems to have possessed the greatest ascendancy in the councils of his country, and whose avowed principles and views appear to become every day more predominant in the public feelings of his countrymen.

In respect to the Gulf of Mexico, and the immense interests, commercial, colonial, and maritime, which are closely connected with the navigation of that Gulf, these Memoirs are full of instruction—I might say of admonitions,—well deserving the most serious attention of the people of this country. I will not trouble the House with any long extracts from them; but I cannot deny myself the opportunity of pointing their attention to a few passages, which show how soon the United States, after they became a separate nation, fixed their eye upon the Gulf of Mexico, and how steadily and successfully they have watched and seized every opportunity to acquire dominion and ascendancy in that part of the world. Within seven years after the time when their independence had been established, and finally recognised in 1783, we find them setting up a claim of positive right to the free navigation of the Mississippi, from its source to the Gulf of Mexico; and it is not a little curious to see what was the opportunity which they took of asserting their right against Spain,—a power which had materially assisted them in obtaining their independence. In the year 1790, it will be recollected that a dispute had arisen between England and Spain respecting Nootka Sound. Whilst these two countries were arming, and every thing appeared to threaten war between them, the United States thought that they saw, in the embarrassment of Spain, an opening to claim this navigation as of right. Whether such a claim could or could not be sustained by any principle of the law of nations, is a question which I will not now stop to examine. The affirmative was at once boldly assumed by America, and her demand proceeded upon that assumption. The right once so affirmed, what does the House think was the corollary which the government of the United States built upon their assertion of that supposed right? I will give it in the words of Mr. Jefferson himself, not a private individual, but the Secretary of State, conveying the in-

structions of his government to Mr. Carmichael, then the American Envoy at Madrid: "You know," writes Mr. Jefferson, "that the navigation cannot be practised without a port, where the sea and river vessels may meet, and exchange loads, and where those employed about them may be safe and unmolested. The right to use a thing comprehends a right to the means necessary to its use, and without which it would be useless." I know not what the expounders of the law of nations in the Old World will have to say to this novel and startling doctrine. In this instruction, which is dated the 2d of August 1790, the principle is only laid down in the abstract.

I will now show the House the special application of it to the claim in question, by quoting another letter from Mr. Jefferson to Mr. Short, the American Envoy at Paris, dated only eight days after the former, namely, the 10th of August. It is as follows;—"The idea of ceding the island of New Orleans could not be hazarded to Spain, in the first step: it would be too disagreeable at first view; because this island, with its town, constitutes, at present, their principal settlement in that part of their dominions (Louisiana), containing about ten thousand white inhabitants, of every age and sex. Reason and events, however, may, by little and little, familiarize them to it. That we have a right to some spot as an *entrepôt* for our commerce may be at once affirmed. I suppose this idea (the cession of New Orleans) too much even for the Count de Montmorin at first, and that, therefore, you will find it prudent to urge, and get him to recommend to the Spanish Court, only in general terms, a port near the mouth of the river, with a circumjacent territory, sufficient for its support, well defined, and extra-territorial to Spain, leaving the idea to future growth."

Contrary to the expectation of the United States when those instructions were given, Great Britain and Spain settled their differences without an appeal to arms; and, in consequence, these practical applications of the law of nations were no longer pressed by the United States. Soon after, Spain became involved in war with France, and that war terminated in her being compelled to cede Louisiana to the latter power. In 1803, that whole province was sold by France to the United States. By this purchase they acquired not only New Orleans, but a very extensive territory within the Gulf of Mexico. I next go to the year 1806. Mr. Jefferson was then no longer Secretary of State—he had been raised to the more important post of President of the United States. In that character we find him writing to Mr. Monroe, then the American Minister in London, in the following terms:—"We begin to broach the idea, that we consider the whole Gulf—
as of our own waters, in which hostilities and cruising are

to be frowned on for the present, and prohibited so soon as either consent or force will permit us." The letter from which this is an extract, is dated the 4th of May, 1806.

If the United States "broached this idea" in 1806, they are not likely to have abandoned it in 1819, when, in addition to Louisiana, they procured, by treaty with Spain, the further important cession of the Floridas. That it is a growing, rather than a waning, principle of their policy, I think we may infer from a letter, which we find in this Correspondence, not written, indeed, by Mr. Jefferson in any public character, but addressed by him, as a person exercising from his retirement the greatest sway in the councils of the Union, to the President. This letter, dated so lately as the 24th of October 1823, discusses the interest of the United States in respect to Cuba and the Gulf of Mexico, and these are the statements which it avows:—"I candidly confess, that I ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States. The control which, with Florida Point, this island would give us over the Gulf of Mexico, and the countries and isthmus bordering on it, as well as all those whose waters flow into it, would fill up the measure of our political well-being. Yet I am sensible that this can never be obtained, even with her own consent, but by war."

That a war arising out of these pretensions may one day occur is, perhaps, but too probable. The progress which the United States have already made towards the attainment of objects so manifestly within their contemplation, calls upon us not to regard that contingency as one which provident statesmen may safely dismiss from their minds. It is their duty to neglect no measure of justice within their power to prevent it. The rest must be left to Providence. But if there be any one course of policy, on the part of this country, more likely than another to retard that calamity, it is to be found in those measures which are most likely to heal the wounds of Mexico,—to enable her to establish her government upon a firm and solid basis,—to encourage her industry, and to put her in a condition to guard her territory against every attempt, either openly made, or indirectly pursued, to trench upon her power and independence. For this purpose, she must be relieved from the necessity of maintaining a military force, disproportioned to her resources, by the constant dread of desultory attacks from Cuba. The government and supreme authority of the state must no longer be the sport of an army, licentious because ill paid, wasting the productive capitals of the country, partly from the necessity, but more, perhaps, from the extravagant and demoralizing habits which such elements of revolution never fail to engender. Let Mexico be at her ease in respect to attacks from Spain, and she will soon become a valuable ally of

this country, with all her interests bound up and identified with the best interests of Great Britain in the New World. On the other hand, let her remain much longer in her present harassed and exhausting condition, and the poverty of her treasury,—the necessity of making head against those attacks, may throw her into the arms of the United States, and force her to sacrifices which would inevitably bring on a maritime war, unless this country be prepared to abandon her colonial empire, her commercial pretensions, and, with them, her maritime ascendancy in the New World.

Sir, I will not pursue these topics further. I trust I have said enough to point the attention of Parliament and of the country to their vast importance; and, if so, I am sure that I shall stand justified for the unusual length at which I have detained the House upon the mere presentation of a petition. One part of the subject, however, remains to be noticed, and it is brought to my recollection by the motion of the honourable member for Callington,* which stands for this evening. It is from Mexico that the great supply of the precious metals is derived, and the whole of Europe is now suffering from the obstruction of that supply. The only speedy, certain, and efficacious relief for that suffering, so far as it is produced by a general depression of prices, is to be found in the productiveness of the mines of that country. I have never denied that the pressure which prevails in this country, upon all the active classes of the community, is, in a great degree, to be ascribed to the progressive fall in the money value of all commodities. This fall has occasioned great hardship, and produced considerable discontent in every part of Europe. There is no state, therefore, that has not the greatest interest in the complete restoration of the mining industry of Mexico. But this is not to be hoped for so long as war continues. Where there is so great a common concern, a joint but decided effort ought to be made by all the powers of Europe for the speedy restoration of peace between Spain and her former colonies. Let them, one and all, insist upon the termination of hostilities, useless for every object of legitimate warfare,—calamitous to both the belligerent parties,—and seriously affecting the comfort and happiness of every other civilized community. I have now only to move that the petition be brought up.

* Mr. Attwood.

MR. HUSKISSON'S EXPOSITION OF THE STATE
OF THE COUNTRY.

MARCH 16th, 1830.

THIS day Mr. E. D. Davenport moved, "that the Petitions presented to the House, complaining of the Distresses of various classes of the Community, be referred to a Committee of the whole House, with a view to inquire into the causes of their grievances and the remedy thereof." Upon which, Sir Charles Burrell moved, as an amendment, "that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the causes of the national distress, and whether any and what remedies can be applied."

Mr. HUSKISSON rose, and spoke in substance as follows:—

Sir;—The principal arguments which have hitherto been adduced in favour of the motion,—I might, indeed, say the whole—by those who have given it an unqualified support, turn upon some undefined alteration, which they wish to effect in our Currency.

The honourable baronet who immediately preceded me, has ventured into the field of prophecy. He predicts, that we must, ere long, come to one of these alternatives—either a depreciation of the currency, by a return to an inconvertible paper circulation, or a national bankruptcy. The honourable baronet fortifies himself in this prediction by quoting one from Mr. Hume, whom he describes as a true prophet, for having foretold, in his Essay upon Public Credit, "that bankruptcy would be, at no distant period, the inevitable result of the extension of our debt." Many years have elapsed—more than seventy—since this prediction of the philosopher was given to the world. I hope that the honourable baronet may, for as many years, continue to survive his prophecy, and to serve his country; but however long his life may be, I trust that many more years will pass away, as in the case of Mr. Hume, before the honourable baronet is found to have been a truer prophet than his predecessor has proved.

Now, Sir, I trust that neither the honourable member for Shaftesbury, who has originated this motion, nor my honourable friend, the member for Shoreham, who has moved the amendment, will consider that I am wanting in respect to them, if I decline to argue, at any length, the state of our Currency, in reference to the alterations which were made in it between the

origin of its derangement in 1797 and its final restoration in 1819. From the period of the Bullion Committee, of which I was a member in 1810, I have so often had occasion to state my opinions on this—the great, though not the only, source, of the difficulties of the country—that I willingly leave to others the task of following the honourable gentlemen upon this exhausted subject. I will only state, that in 1819, when the Bill, now called Mr. Peel's Act, was brought in, I was unavoidably kept away from the House by illness; otherwise I should have given to that measure my active and cordial support. In 1822, when a motion was brought forward by the honourable member for Essex, for revising that act, and altering the standard of value, I had an opportunity of stating very fully my sentiments upon the subject. To that motion I moved an Amendment in the following words, "That this House will not alter the standard of the gold and silver coins of this realm, in weight, fineness, or denomination." In this amendment, after two nights' debate, the House concurred, by a majority of 194 to 30.

If this, Sir, was the resolution of the House, three years only after the act of 1819, how much more ought we to adhere to it in 1830! The greatest of all curses to an opulent and commercial country, is a system of vacillation, unsteadiness, and alternation in its standard of value, frequently disturbing and unsettling the property and fortunes of individuals, and destroying the foundation of confidence and security in all contracts and pecuniary dealings between man and man, as well as in the honour and good faith of the government. I wish I could say that there are no other causes connected with our Currency (even as it now is), which, by affecting commercial credit, render alternations in its value far too frequent, and which I think it ought to be our duty to endeavour to correct.

Were I prepared to admit—which I certainly am not—that in 1819 we should have been justified in lowering the standard of our currency, instead of simply restoring it, I must not the less contend, that we can exercise no such discretion now. I know there are many well-informed persons who take a different view from me, of the course which we might have pursued in 1819, when we had to make a choice upon this subject. It is quite consistent in them, thinking that we committed an error in 1819, to maintain, as most of them, I believe, do, that it is now better to endure the evils which that error has brought upon us, than to venture to disturb the settlement once made, at the risk of all the disquietude, alarm, and derangement, which would inevitably attend such an attempt. From the prevalence of this feeling, I am not afraid that any such attempt will find many partisans in the House; and I own that I consider it a necessary preliminary

to the efficacy of every suggestion of relief, that we should, if possible, pronounce ourselves so decidedly on the permanence of our present monetary system, as finally to set at rest all hopes and fears on this too long agitated question.

There is one branch, indeed, of this subject which does not, I admit, involve any necessary alteration in the standard of our currency: I mean, the circulation of one-pound notes, convertible into coin upon demand. Their suppression rests upon distinct grounds. It is manifest that notes, of the same denomination with our principal gold coin, cannot be allowed, without the effect being to drive the latter out of circulation. Such, therefore, would be the consequence of small notes being again permitted. Upon the first excitement in trade, leading to a general improvement in prices, these notes would be largely issued to facilitate speculations. The foreign exchanges, for a time, would not be materially affected, because these speculations, as far as they led to payments abroad, would be provided for by the exportation of our gold coin. In this mode, the greater part of our coin, as well that deposited in the Bank, as that in circulation, might gradually disappear, the exchanges still remaining very slightly affected. The importation of foreign goods would be promoted by this large exportation of our coin, and by the rise of all commodities in this country. Every thing would appear prosperous; but the prosperity would be short-lived and delusive. The time would come in which the Bank of England, alarmed for its own safety by the lowering of its treasure, would be under the necessity of taking decisive measures to protect itself. The effect would be a renewal of the panic of 1825, and of all the miserable consequences by which it has been followed. If, therefore, we make up our minds again to encourage the circulation of small notes, we must be prepared for one of these alternatives—either their paving the way for, and gradually leading to, another Bank Restriction (from which we so narrowly escaped at the end of the year 1825),—or for alternations of fictitious prosperity, such as immediately preceded that crisis, to be followed by overwhelming distress, such as that by which it was terminated. Upon this ground, it is a great satisfaction to me to find, that his Majesty's Government have resolved to maintain the suppression of one-pound notes in England; not because they are in themselves depreciation, but because, so long as they are suffered to exist, you can only escape the greater calamity of restriction, leading to an inconvertible paper currency, by the evil only second to it in degree, that of such a calamity as befell us in the autumn of 1825.

Looking to the motion, however, in its more general character, I am not one of those who have underrated the present distress. The numerous petitions attest its existence, and a document,

recently distributed to the members of this House, is unfortunately no slight confirmation that their allegations are but too well founded. The document to which I allude, is, "An Account of the monthly amount of the sums paid in and paid out, on account of Savings' Banks, for the last two years." The year 1828 exhibits the following amounts—paid in, 945,448*l.*—drawn out, 678,420*l.*:—the year 1829, paid in, 449,493—drawn out, 1,444,937*l.* The figures,* and the comparison which they afford, speak for themselves, and must be taken as a strong indication of the increasing difficulties of the laborious classes in the year 1829. But whilst I acknowledge, and deeply lament, the intensity of suffering and misery which have been endured in many quarters, especially during the last severe winter, I cannot take that gloomy and hopeless view of our situation, to which some appear to yield themselves up. I never can believe, that a country like England, however crippled for a time by some derangement in the system of its interior economy, can be reduced, all at once, to a helpless weakness, and irremediable decay. I have a more just reliance upon the sources of our wealth and power, and in every branch which constitutes the substantial riches and real strength of the country, its agriculture, its commerce, its manufactures, its immense accumulation of fixed capital, the energy of our national character, and the indefatigable industry of an ingenious, enterprising, and orderly population. I have a further ground of well founded confidence for the present, and of sanguine hope for the future, in an enlightened public opinion, exercising every year more and more, under the benefits of free discussion, its salutary influence upon the councils of ministers, as well as upon the deliberations of Parliament. There is no man, I think, who can read the signs of the times, who can recollect the occurrences of the last, or who witnesses those of the present session—those I might say which have marked the present week,—without feeling this consolation. This growth of intelligence, it is true, is not in itself either productive industry or national wealth: but it is the shield which protects both against the encroachments of power, and the errors of empiricism. It is the finger-post, which, in the hour of doubt and difficulty, points the path of safety, and guides us in the career of national improvement.

Admitting then, as I do, the existence of distress, but hoping, at the same time, that, for the present at least, we have seen its worst, it still becomes my duty, whilst I cling to that hope, to inquire into the causes which, in the midst of profound peace,

*The difference has, in some degree, been since accounted for by a change in the law, and in the reduction of the rate of interest allowed by Government, which took place in November 1828.

have produced such frequent recurrences of public embarrassment.

It appears to me, Sir,—and it is well known to several of my right honourable friends, that my opinion is of much longer standing than the present emergency,—that the main difficulty, not an occasional, but rather an habitual difficulty, under which this country labours, is the too great pressure upon the springs and sources of productive industry: and that this pressure, from the very circumstance of its being too great in ordinary times, becomes excessive, and is subject to fits of exacerbation, from any incidental casualty, such as an ungenial season, or a temporary derangement in any considerable branch of our manufactures or trade. To a casualty of this description we must always be liable, but it ought not to reduce us to suffering like that which we now endure, if we had been before in a robust and healthy condition.

If I am asked the cause of the habitual existence of this too great pressure, I can only state the impression of my own mind. It is simply this, that, in the distribution of the annual income of the country, by which I mean every thing, having value in exchange, that is raised and produced by the labour of its inhabitants, and from which fund are derived the subsistence, the comforts, and the enjoyments of all, from the monarch to the peasant,—I say that, in its distribution, the portion of it reserved for reproduction is now, and has been for some years, less than it ought to be, either for the well-being of the labouring classes—the immediate instrument of that reproduction,—or for the due maintenance, and progressive growth, of the capitals by which their labour is called into active exertion.

I am aware that, in this statement, I have only said in other words, that the wages of labour have been too low, and the profits of fructifying or productive capital less than they ought to be: but there is an advantage, in a discussion like the present, in describing these evils, so as to trace them to their elementary causes.

Many concurrent circumstances have contributed, since the restoration of peace, to produce this unsatisfactory state of things. Over some of the causes to which it may be traced, we have, from different reasons, little or no control: for instance, we cannot regulate the course of the seasons, or the competition of other countries with the products of our own in the foreign market. Neither can we interpose our authority—God forbid we should!—to stop the progress of improvement in mechanical or chemical science, or to interfere between landlord and tenant or in the other pecuniary dealings of society. To the consequences of other causes of difficulty we have deliberately submitted, as the

only way of escaping from far greater evils; for instance, in putting an end to an inconvertible paper currency.

But there are causes which, if they have produced any part of the evil, are completely within our control. I allude now to that change in our commercial policy, to which so much of our present distress has been ascribed, by clamour out of doors, and by more than one speaker in this debate. When people are suffering, nothing is more easy, and, with superficial observers, more common, than to raise, or join in, any cry which saves the trouble of thinking. Free Trade, as it has been absurdly nicknamed, by those who use words without knowing what they themselves mean, has in this way been denounced by the disappointed selfishness of some, and adopted without consideration by others, as the source of all our difficulties. It has been so designated by the honourable Alderman,* one of the members for the City of London, by the honourable members for Cornwall and Newark, and by others; but none of these honourable members ever condescend to tell us what they mean, or understand, by Free Trade. It is of this that I have before complained, and that I again complain on this occasion. Do they know the changes which have been made in our commercial policy, since the restoration of peace? If they do, why not point out to this house specifically the alterations of which they disapprove, and move, as it is fully competent for them to do, for the repeal of the particular Acts by which they have been affected, and for the revival of Acts, now no longer upon the Statute Book, by which industry and trade would again be placed under their former regulations? Would not this course be more consistent with the straightforward duty of legislation, than to give their countenance to a senseless clamour, and to keep up delusion and irritation among a suffering people, instead of making any attempt to administer that relief, which, if they have faith in their own declamations, it is in their power to propose? I say now, as I have said before, it is the duty of those gentlemen to tell us, intelligibly and in detail, what it is that has been done which ought to be undone, and what they would substitute for that which is now in existence. Every challenge of this sort they have hitherto declined, forgetting that it is scarcely fair to arraign a system which they are not prepared to amend, and that they are sent here, not to aggravate what is wrong by inflammatory denunciations, but to correct it by calm counsel and appropriate remedies. This is a duty which they cannot expect to devolve upon those who differ with them in principle; and if they are not prepared to act upon it themselves, their omission is equally unjustifiable towards those who

* Alderman Waithman.

concur in their opinions, and towards Parliament, of which the measures are the objects of their obloquy and abuse; and when I say Parliament, perhaps, as the individual in this House most immediately responsible for those measures, and who, as such, has come in for the greatest share of that obloquy and abuse, I too may be allowed personally to complain of the injustice towards myself of this continued dereliction of their duty. Six or seven hundred statutes, passed for improving the commerce and industry of the country by a system of protection, prohibition, restriction, and interference, have been repealed. How many of these laws do they propose to re-enact? Or do they wish to revive the whole, with all their vexatious, conflicting, frequently contradictory, and invariably absurd, regulations? Do they wish again to introduce prohibition as a principle for the encouragement of trade, and to revive monopoly as a benefit to the consumer? If they do, in God's name, let them make the attempt, and let Parliament, under the guidance of common sense and public opinion, decide between the advocates of such a system, and the support of what they deride, but dare not discuss, as the system of Free Trade.

The honourable Baronet who spoke last indeed, the member for the county of Cornwall, has denounced that system as one which has for its sole object to *force* exports. There cannot be a more mistaken view of the subject. A forcing system, either of exports or imports, is altogether at variance with the policy which it has been my duty to recommend. That policy has been rather to put an end to such a system, and without any forcing, to leave to individuals to follow their own views, to regulate their own speculations, and to consult their own interests. This I consider to be a general rule, applicable alike to the industry and the commerce of the country. Exceptions to it may be justified upon grounds of special expediency; but they ought to be watched with the more jealousy, as every such exception is a departure from that course which, in the long-run, must be most conducive to public prosperity.

We are told, indeed, by the honourable Alderman, and others of his school, who cannot deny that the quantity of goods exported of late years has greatly increased, that the more you export, the greater your loss; and the foundation of this almost ludicrous doctrine is, that the aggregate value of such exports has diminished in a greater proportion than the quantity exported has increased. Do the advocates of this doctrine seriously mean to contend, that our export trade, upon an average, is a losing concern, and that it goes on increasing, year after year, in proportion as it becomes more and more unprofitable? When I ask them this question, I do not mean to deny that some adventures have

been attended with loss; that upon others the profit has been very small; but I cannot believe that men of common sense, prudence, and calculation, would, for a great length of time, persevere, much less that they should voluntarily increase their speculations, in any trade, when the amount of loss and not of profit (however low the latter) was to be measured by the scale of such speculations. In fact, Sir, I have one short answer to the tenets of that school of which the honourable Alderman and the honourable member for Newark are now the acknowledged chiefs. It is this,—If you resort at all to the foreign market, you must be content to sell your commodities for the prices which you can procure in competition with the like articles, the produce of any other countries. You cannot control their capital,—you cannot regulate their industry—and do you expect to improve the chance of meeting them at equal prices, by subjecting your own people to restraints and burthens, from which those with whom they have to compete are free? The honourable Alderman, therefore, must make his election; either our export trade must cease, or we must be content with the price which the foreign market will yield. The purchaser in that market concerns himself very little about the cost of production here, or elsewhere; quality and price are the considerations by which he is governed, in his choice between the British and the foreign competitor. Now, if this be the principle which regulates every foreign market to which our merchants resort, does it not follow, as a necessary consequence, that the price, in our own market, of every article, the like of which we export for foreign consumption, must be regulated by the selling price abroad? If the price abroad be permanently depressed, the home price must partake of that depression. This must be my first answer to those who tell us, that the home market of the country is every thing, the only market deserving of encouragement. The home trade must, of necessity, be of great importance, and value; but it has been sacrificed, ruined, and put down (we are told) by the forcing and encouragement given, under the new system, to our export trade. To maintain this position the following argument, if argument it can be called, is had recourse to. The increase of our export trade has been followed by a more than proportionate decrease of the home trade; by forcing the one you have injured the other, and the result is, that both have become unprofitable. I know not how to measure the home trade, except by the home consumption. It may be difficult, especially for an individual like myself, unaided by the facilities which office affords, to ascertain accurately the amount of that consumption. I have, however, endeavoured, by reference to the returns to this House, and with the aid of some intelligent friends in the mercantile line, to collect informa-

tion upon this point; and I will now, with the permission of the House, state the result. I have selected articles of the most extensive use in the manufactures of this country, and I have made my comparison upon the consumption of five years; namely, from 1816 (I select this as the year of the highest return) to 1820, both inclusive, and in like manner for the last five years, from 1824 to 1828.

The first article to which I shall refer is Cotton Wool. The average annual importation, from 1816 to 1820, was 139,141,646 lbs.:—the average annual importation from 1824 to 1828 was 210,886,992 lbs. The average annual exportation of Cotton Wool for the same periods was, for the first, 11,873,800 lbs., for the second, 21,298,800 lbs.; leaving of Cotton Wool for manufacture in this country, an annual average, for the first period, of 127,267,846 lbs.; and for the second, 189,588,192 lbs. These respective quantities were disposed of in each period, in the manufactured state, as nearly as can be ascertained, as follows: first—Cotton Yarn exported (one-eighth being added for waste), the annual average of the first period, 19,984,664 lbs.—in the second period, 48,472,202 lbs.:—secondly—Cotton Cloth exported (computing six yards of cloth of all kinds to be produced from one pound of cotton), annual average of the first period, 255,507,058 yards—in the second period, 360,265,256 yards:—thirdly,—Cotton Cloth retained for home consumption (computing one pound of cotton to make five yards of cloth), in the first period, 227,003,484 yards—in the second period, 399,678,923 yards. I may here just observe, that the estimate of six yards to the pound of cotton for foreign, and of five for home, consumption, is supposed to be the nearest approach to accuracy, by those who are practically most conversant with the manufacture.

The next article is Sheep's Wool. The annual average importation of the first period is 14,443,834 lbs.;—of the second, 28,356,417 lbs.: retained for home use, in the first period, 14,430,917 lbs.;—in the second, 27,629,561 lbs.: official value of woollens exported in the first period—annual average, 5,313,429*l*.;—in the second, 5,763,632*l*. Now, the principal quantity of the wool imported is of the finer qualities; and as the increase of export in the manufactured articles of woollen cloth is very trifling, it follows that a great increase of consumption must have taken place in this country; unless it be maintained (which it certainly cannot, the reverse being the fact), that the growth of British Wool has been diminished in a degree corresponding with the increased foreign supply. The increased home consumption is principally in fine cloth made of Saxon and the high-priced wools.

The next article of import is Silk. The averages are as follows

—Raw and waste, from 1816 to 1820, 1,444,000 lbs.—thrown ditto, 303,126 lbs.—from 1824 to 1828, Raw and waste, 3,437,432 lbs.;—thrown, 447,504 lbs.;—the export of manufactured silk goods has varied very little, upon a comparison of these two periods.

The importation of Flax is, for the first period, 368,371 cwt.;—for the second, 830,421 cwt. I have not been able to obtain any satisfactory information as to the quantity of Linen Cloth exported, but there can be no doubt of a greatly increased consumption at home.

Hides, in the first period, imported, 679,996;—re-exported, 221,200; retained for home use, 458,796;—in the second period, imported, 1,873,314;—re-exported, 211,448;—retained for home use, 1,661,866.

The next articles are Tallow and Palm Oil, for the manufacture of candles and soap. Imported in the first period, of tallow, 545,540 cwt.—palm oil, 34,910 cwt.—soap exported, official valuation, 116,037*l.*;—candles exported, weight, 4,931,597 lbs.: second period, tallow imported, 946,760 cwt.—palm oil, 95,942 cwt.—soap exported, official value, 183,849*l.*; candles exported, weight, 7,818,718 lbs.

The last article which I shall mention is that of fir Timber; the annual average import of the first period was 289,379 loads:—in the second, for four years, ending 1827 (I have not been able to procure the return for 1828), 541,654 loads.

There remains, however, one other branch of our national wealth and industry, to which I must advert before I quit this part of the subject. From its importance, both in a commercial and political point of view, I could not pass it over, even if it had been omitted by the honourable members who have preceded me in this debate. I allude, Sir, to our Shipping, which is stated to be fast verging to decay and ruin. If it had been asserted, that the profits of the Ship-Owner were very greatly diminished, as compared to the period of war, and that they were small, even when calculated upon the present reduced value of the ship, I certainly should not deny the position. I regret that the returns of capital in this, as in other branches of productive industry, are less than I could wish them to be; but when the interest of money and the profits of stock are generally low, it would be vain to expect that the capital employed in Shipping should form an exception. Indeed, from circumstances peculiar to the shipping interest, it was likely to suffer a greater revulsion than any other from the restoration of peace.

At the close of the war, our shipping had engrossed the navigation of other countries; and near one sixth of the tonnage of our merchant ships was employed in the public service as transports.

The commerce and navigation of other nations are now returned to their usual course in peace, and nine-tenths of our transports have been discharged from the public service. By the Returns, which were laid before the House of Commons in the course of last session, it would appear, that, in the year 1816, we had 25,864 registered vessels, measuring 2,783,940 tons;—and that in 1828, the number of registered vessels was only 24,095, measuring 2,508,191 tons. This diminution has been commented upon, as showing conclusively the gradual and melancholy decline of the Shipping Interest. It is, perhaps, scarcely worth while to observe, that by the same Return the tonnage appears to have been reduced, so early as 1823, to 2,506,760 tons; that in 1827, it is stated at 2,460,500 tons;—being in the first of these two years, a trifle, and in the second 48,000 tons less than in the year 1828. But it is more material to state, that in the year 1816, the amount of tonnage was swelled by returning many ships which had long ceased to exist, and that at present the Returns are accurately made.

There is another parliamentary paper, however, which was also furnished last session, and which, if properly considered, in conjunction with that to which I have now referred, will throw great and very satisfactory light upon this subject. It is the paper which exhibits the number and tonnage of British vessels, entered inwards and cleared outwards, in our trade with all foreign parts, for the same period as the former paper, namely, from 1814 to 1828, both inclusive. We have already seen that in 1816 the total tonnage of our registered shipping was 2,783,940: now, in that year, the total tonnage entered inwards from all foreign parts was 1,415,723—cleared outwards to all foreign parts, 1,340,277 tons—making together 2,756,000—being a fraction more than one ton of shipping for every ton of goods entered inwards and cleared outwards. In 1828 our whole tonnage, as I have already stated, was 2,508,191; but in that year the entries inward were 2,094,357—and the clearances outwards 2,096,397—making together 4,190,754 tons, being somewhat less than five-eighths of a ton of registered shipping to every ton of goods entered inwards and cleared outwards, and being, moreover, a positive increase upon the entries and clearances of 1816, to the amount of 1,434,754 tons;—rather more than either of them separately amounted to in that year. I might further state, that the account of vessels entered inwards and cleared outwards for 1829 has been delivered this morning, and is as follows:—inwards 2,184,535—outwards 2,063,179, making together 4,247,714 tons,—an increase, as the House will perceive, upon the antecedent year. Now I need scarcely remark to the House, that the quantity of goods, carried to and fro between this coun-

try and all foreign parts, in British ships, within a given period is the true measure of the degree of employment and activity of our commercial marine. If our ships had been navigated backwards and forwards, at the same rate of movement in 1828 as in 1816, it would have required upwards of 4,200,000 tons to have executed the transference of goods, which, in 1828, was performed by 2,500,000 tons of registered shipping.—On the other hand, if the accelerated movement of 1828 had prevailed in 1816, the transference of goods which, in that year, required 2,783,946 tons, might have been accomplished by about 1,700,000 tons of registered shipping. If gentlemen think this change a misfortune, nothing can be more easy than to rectify it. We have only to restore the vexatious and contradictory laws, partly fiscal, partly protective, as they were called, partly commercial, which threw impediments and delays in the way of our commerce and navigation. We have only to take care that ships should not load and unload, make their entries, and obtain their clearances, with the present ease and dispatch. We have only to restore in our Custom-Houses the regulations which harassed the ship-owner and the merchant, and to provide that the convenience and expedition, now so conspicuous in our commercial docks, should be so checked, and encumbered with dilatory forms and useless interference, as to bring us back to the more sober pace of our former system. This is a task which I can scarcely be called upon to undertake: let those who arraign these improvements as ruinous innovations, propose their repeal, and thus bring the two systems to a fair issue.

But, before they attempt to effect their purpose, let them calculate the results to the Shipping Interest. In trade, the economy of time will always be found to be the economy of money. Every restraint is an increased expenditure of the one or the other. It adds, in more ways than one, to the charge at which the raw material can be delivered to our manufacturers, and the manufactured article conveyed to the foreign market. It operates as a premium in favour of rival manufactures, and as a tax upon our own. From what fund is that premium to be drawn, and that tax paid, except from the profits of the manufacturer's capital, and the wages of the labourer whom he employs? For, as was well observed by the gallant member for Windsor, the price in the foreign market, be it what it may, must determine the price in our own market. If we are beaten in this race of competition, we shall want fewer carriers to effect the interchange of the products of our industry, against the raw materials of other countries. And how is the Shipping Interest to be benefited by the curtailment of our foreign trade?

The truth is, that, under all the difficulties with which our

general industry, including our shipping, has had to contend, since the restoration of peace—difficulties growing out of the enormous expenditure of war—the necessary restoration of our currency—and the active rivalry of other nations—nothing but a timely relaxation of our restrictive and expensive system, would have enabled us to bear up against the complicated disadvantages of our situation. That relaxation, so far as it has gone—and it ought to go further—has been gradually introduced, with due regard to the interests and arrangements which had grown up under a different system. But for the intervention of so many years of war, and of a war so peculiar in its character, these improvements would have been introduced, not only at an earlier period, but with less of friction and embarrassment in carrying them into effect. For I can take upon myself to affirm, from personal knowledge of Mr. Pitt's sentiments and views, that there was nothing which he more regretted, in the derangement of war, than the interruption which it gave to the improvement of our commercial policy,—an improvement, which he looked to in the temperate and cautious liberation of trade and industry, from all unnecessary shackles and impediments.

These arguments, Sir, may have little weight with that select class, who claim to be, exclusively, our practical guides in political economy. With them, foreign commerce is a matter almost of indifference: according to them, England can be great, happy, and flourishing, within herself. Of what England they are speaking, I know not; certainly not of *this country*, as it now exists. The raw materials of every great branch of our industry (mineral wealth excepted) are derived, either wholly, or in great part, from foreign soils. Cotton,—which gives employment to perhaps two millions of people—wholly. Silk, which employs about 500,000,—wholly. Wool, in great proportion.—Hemp and Flax, in a proportion still greater.—Fir Timber for all building purposes, nearly the whole.—Dyeing Drugs, the same.—I say nothing of luxuries, such as wine, &c. But, looking only to the articles which I have enumerated, I would ask—are gentlemen prepared to dispense with the comforts which the use of them here affords to our population? And if they are, are they still further prepared to tell us how that population could be maintained, if the conversion of these raw materials did not give employment to their industry? With what but that manufactured industry can we purchase them from other countries? Have we any superfluous raw materials of our own, with which to make the purchase? Where is the spare corn, or the spare produce of our soil, which can be sent abroad for this purpose? No, Sir, of these productions we do not grow enough for our own wants. Our population, then, so far as it is employed in working up the

raw materials of other countries, must find in its own industry the means of procuring those raw materials. Without them, that industry must cease; that population (it amounts to millions) must perish; and then indeed, England—but not England great, happy, and flourishing—England, reduced to its former insignificance and barbarism—may disregard foreign trade.

If, then, relief is not to be looked for by undoing, but rather by persevering in and extending, our present system of commercial policy; our next inquiry must be, how far that relief is attainable by a revision of the Finances of the country. Within the limits of public faith, the amount of our taxation is under our control; and in respect to the mode in which it is assessed, distributed, and raised, the whole public revenue may be considered as liable to whatever alterations the wisdom of Parliament may find expedient.

First, then, with respect to its positive amount, under the altered circumstances of the country, since the restoration of peace. I had occasion to state my opinion on this subject to the Committee upon Agricultural Distress in 1821, and as it is recorded in their Report, I beg leave very shortly to refer to it. It is as follows:—

“Your Committee cannot disguise from themselves, that the weight of the public burthens of the country, their nominal amount remaining the same, must be more severely felt, in proportion as the money incomes derived from trading, farming, and manufacturing capital and industry are diminished. No exertion, therefore, should be omitted to endeavour to reduce those burthens, as nearly as circumstances will permit, in the degree in which such incomes have been reduced: for, in considering this subject, it is important to bear in mind, that the general amount and real pressure of taxation have been positively increased in the proportion of the improved value of our currency.”

I still retain that opinion; indeed, every thing which has since occurred has only tended to confirm it. The course at which it points is obvious. It is that which, I willingly admit, is now followed by his Majesty's Government. Credit is due to them for the retrenchments, certainly not inconsiderable, which they have already made, as well as for the new checks which they have established, and the further ones which they contemplate, for repressing that tendency to the growth of expenditure, which constantly prevails in every department of the public service. A tendency which, as it pervades all branches of expenditure, requires to be steadily watched, and kept within bounds—of late years it appears to have been most vivacious, if I may use the expression, in that branch which is familiarly called the Dead
ght.

After all the details and explanations upon this subject, which I have heard with satisfaction from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I remain of opinion, that the proposed regulations ought, in some instances, to be drawn somewhat tighter, and that retrenchment may be carried considerably further. The Government has once gone over the wide field of expenditure, but what they have cut down is not adequate to the wants and expectations of the country. Let them repeat the operation, and they will find that more than gleanings are left behind. In the collection and management of the revenue, it was admitted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, there is still room for reduction and reform. The diplomatic and consular establishment may be pared down without detriment to the public service. The door of admission to half pay, retired allowances, and superannuations of every sort, must be further straitened and narrowed. A careful revision of the Colonial Establishments will afford a considerable saving. The expenses incurred on the coast of Africa ought, on every consideration, to be greatly diminished. The laxity of control over the appropriation of the revenue arising from Crown Lands calls for revision. This branch of the revenue, as much as the Customs or Excise, constitutes a part of the consolidated fund, subject to the expenses of management. Under this head of Management it may be proper to include the expense of the maintaining, repairing, and keeping up that part of the Crown Estate, which is expressly reserved for the recreation or state of the monarch, such as parks, lodges, &c.; but as in the Civil List, so in this instance, a specific annual sum ought to be allotted for that purpose; not to be exceeded without an application to, and an express vote of, the House of Commons.

There are also the savings which may, I hope, be effected in the great heads of our expense, the military and naval establishments of the country. I have made no objections to the estimates for the Army and Navy this year. In fixing the numbers, the Government, acting upon their information and responsibility, have a right to expect some degree of confidence from the House; especially if, from circumstances of notoriety, it should appear that, in the pending concerns of the world, some matters remain to be adjusted, and that every thing is not in its right place. If, by the next year, the mists which surround us shall be dissipated, if the political horizon shall be, on every side, clear and bright, if Ireland shall continue—as I am confident it will—to improve in its internal tranquillity, and in good feelings towards this country, I should, in the ensuing session, expect no inconsiderable reduction in the amount of our public force.

Whatever savings may be effected in all these branches of expenditure, or in any other, they will add so much to our relief

But, when the whole of the charge over which we can exercise any immediate control, is not more than 11,000,000*l.*, the further reduction which remains practicable, to be consistent with the public safety, and the efficiency of Government, cannot be very considerable. Indeed, I much doubt whether, if we are to retain a reasonable surplus of revenue,—I will not say upon the principle of a sinking fund, but as the necessary guard and provision against the effect of those fluctuations to which our public income is liable,—any further absolute reduction of taxation can be anticipated, from the utmost amount of retrenchment that can be made, unless the produce of the remaining taxes should be very greatly increased, in consequence of the relief now to be given to the people.

I will shortly state the grounds of this opinion. The Chancellor of the Exchequer estimates the surplus of the present year at about 2,600,000*l.* I will take for granted the data upon which this estimate was made. I hope my right honourable friend will not think that I am doing him a disservice, when I remark, that he has under-stated the extent of relief which he is about to give to the country. He estimates it at 3,400,000*l.*: now, the average net payment into the Exchequer from the duties about to be taken off, for a period of the last five years, was 3,737,000*l.*; and as the barley crop failed in one of those years, 1827, I think it may be taken in round numbers at 3,750,000*l.*, leaving, consequently, a deficiency upon the estimated surplus of this year of 1,150,000*l.* Now, if the reduction of the 4 per cents., taken at 700,000*l.*, the new taxes proposed by my right honourable friend, estimated at 400,000*l.*, and the further savings to be made, should amount altogether to 2,000,000*l.*, our surplus would be rather less than 1,000,000*l.*, being an allowance of about two per cent. upon our income, to meet all the incidents and casualties to which it is liable.

Assuming, then, that absolute abatement of taxation cannot, for the present at least, be carried further, the question which remains for consideration (and I can assure the House that I have anxiously turned it in my own mind, in the interval since the Budget was made known to us) is, will the proposed remission be all that is requisite for the effectual and permanent relief of the country? I am sorry to say that I incline to think it will not. In the view which I take of our present difficulties, the main cause of them, in my opinion, as stated at the outset of what I have now addressed to the House, and which, that I may not be misunderstood, in substance I repeat, is this—that in the distribution of the annual wealth of the country, taking it according to the ordinary and admitted division into rent, profits of stock, and wages of labour, the two latter, from a complication of concur-

rent circumstances, of which taxation is one, are now in the receipt of less than their just share. I may further state, that such a condition of society cannot long be continued, without its laying the foundation of national impoverishment. There is a short passage in Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," which so forcibly points out the calamitous tendency of this condition of society, that I cannot forbear pressing it upon the serious attention of the House. "To complain," he says, "of the liberal reward of labour, is to lament over the necessary effect and cause of the greatest public prosperity. The condition of the labourer is hard in the stationary, and miserable in the declining state. The progressive state is in reality the cheerful and the hearty state to all the different orders of society. The stationary is dull—the declining melancholy."

If we are in danger of falling into this state of things, and if we cannot be adequately protected against the risk by any practical diminution in the positive amount of our burthens, may we not guard ourselves against it by some change in the principle and distribution of the remaining taxation.

In approaching this part of the subject, I am aware that I am treading upon tender ground. I know that I shall not only meet with great difference of opinion, but that I shall expose myself, probably, to considerable clamour and obloquy. It is impossible to touch upon it without coming into collision with the interests (at least as the parties understand them) of many, and those, perhaps, the most powerful both in this House and in the country. But, Sir, when I am addressing you upon a subject of such deep importance, I feel myself bound by a sense of public duty, be the consequence to myself personally what it may, to state a strong doubt (I wish to put it no higher), whether we shall afford adequate relief, without removing a larger amount of those taxes which press directly upon income arising from capital engaged in industry, and upon the income of labour to which that capital gives employment; transferring, as far as may be indispensable, the burthen upon all that class of income which arises from capital not so employed.

Sir, my gallant friend, the member for Windsor, has called upon us to compare the habits of society, in the higher walks of life, with what they were fifty years ago. Like him, and with him, I have lived long enough to bear testimony to the change which has taken place. Let any man compare the metropolis now with what it was at that period; not only its positive growth, but still more the extension of splendor in buildings, in furniture, in plate, in the habits of luxury, and in display of every description. Having mentioned plate, Sir, I may remark, as a striking evidence of this change, the difference of the amount of the duty

upon that one article, between the year 1804 and the last year. The rate of duty upon silver wrought plate in 1804 was 1*s.* 3*d.* upon gold 16*s.* per ounce; it was afterwards raised to 1*s.* 6*d.* upon silver, and to 17*s.* upon gold. But what has been the increase in the net produce of the duty? It has risen from less than 5,000*l.* in 1804, to upwards of 105,000*l.* in 1828; a rise of more than twenty-fold, notwithstanding the greatly diminished supply from the mines, and the consequent increasing value, of the precious metals. It may be further remarked, that this augmented consumption shows how large a portion of gold and silver is annually diverted from the purposes of coin to those of ornament and luxury.

Have the articles most necessary to the scanty comfort of the humble dwellings of the labouring classes been multiplied in the same proportion? I am afraid that, in too many cases, an inverse ratio would rather be the correct answer. Look at the earnings and condition of that population which raises the produce of the soil, or from early dawn to midnight throws the shuttle for bare subsistence, and compare them with those of the artisans, who minister to all the various enjoyments and gratifications of wealth, in this great town. Contrast the hourly dealings for millions, at that great mart of money, the Stock Exchange, with the stunted transactions and falling-off of our country markets. In London the bankers, the moneyed men of all descriptions, complain of the glut of money. We hear of seven or eight millions deposited, for want of employment, in the Bank of England alone. Ingenuity is incessantly at work in devising new and tempting speculations, to call forth these locked-up capitals, of which too large a portion has already been thrown away upon rash and gambling speculations, or placed at hazard upon the precarious security of foreign loans. In the country, you hear of nothing but the bewailings of industry, and the want of money, confidence, and credit. The country banker, reluctant to make advances, and the prudent man, who is still solvent, cautious and tardy in applying for them, because productive speculation, however carefully conducted, holds out too little prospect of gain to compensate for the risk of loss, with which, more or less, it must always be attended. It is notorious to all, who know what is passing in the different counties of the kingdom, that country banks,—in better times those salutary reservoirs for the alternate deposit and distribution of circulating wealth, through all the ramifications of active industry—now send that wealth up to town, to be lent for short periods upon stock, and other floating securities upon the Stock Exchange. This system is, perhaps, safe for themselves, but, at best, of very doubtful benefit to the public; affording, for aught I know, to a few individuals increased facilities for gigantic

speculations; swelling still further the already overgrown fortunes of some, but bringing misery and ruin upon others; and diverting the thoughts and aspirations of all who come within its vortex, from the sober and steady courses of their forefathers, to pursuits as little conducive, I believe, to individual happiness and moral worth, as they certainly are to the growth of wealth in the country; pursuits which, were they multiplied even an hundred-fold, could never add the value of one pepper-corn to our national resources; whilst all the classes, from whom alone wealth can really flow, are labouring under difficulties and complaining of distress.

In considering the effects of our present taxation upon the productive industry of the country, we must constantly bear in mind the necessary consequences of a state of peace, and of a free competition of the industry of other countries with that of our own, in the general market of the world. These consequences, as it has been already so well stated in this debate, are, first,—that we cannot obtain for our commodities a better price than that at which, in this race of competition, the like commodities can be raised, produced, and brought to market by other countries; and, secondly,—that the price at which we can sell abroad must determine the price in the home market. Now, Sir, let us follow out these admitted axioms in all their necessary and legitimate bearings and results.

It will not be denied that a spirit of improvement, an anxious desire to promote industry, zeal for the diffusion of knowledge in all pursuits connected with mechanical and chemical science, and in the beneficial application of them to the useful purposes of life, are now the pervading feelings, not only of every people, but of nearly every government, in the civilized world. Neither can it be denied that, in several countries, a greater degree of freedom in their institutions, and a greater security for property, have, under the uninterrupted enjoyment of peace, promoted the growth of capital, and the other facilities which are necessary to manufacturing and commercial enterprise. This is the rivalry, every day growing more formidable, with which our capital, and industry, and skill, have to contend. If we meet it under some advantages, we have also great and growing disadvantages to encounter. Do not let us lose sight of the fearful consequences which must ensue, if we are distanced in the race. The greatest of all follies on such an occasion, would be to shut our eyes to difficulties which, taken in time, we may, perhaps, overcome, but which, by procrastination, we cannot evade. For a long time we have been the greatest manufacturing and trading nation in the world. We export for sale abroad, in a manufactured state, more or less of almost every thing which we raise or produce. Of the

raw materials of our soil the export is next to nothing. They are barely adequate, indeed I might say inadequate, to the subsistence of our population. Upon an average of years, we cannot do without a supply of foreign corn; and of cheese, butter, and other articles, we have a large annual importation. Our corn laws, however expedient to prevent other evils, in the present state of the country, are in themselves a burthen and a restraint upon its manufacturing and commercial industry. Whilst the products of that industry must descend to the level of the general market of the world, the producers, so far as food is concerned, are debarred from that level. If the price of subsistence,—that is, the price of those particular articles which we never export, and are frequently compelled to import—be materially dearer here than anywhere else, that dearness cannot be shifted to the articles which we do export. It must fall in the way of deduction, either upon the wages and comforts of the labourer, or upon the profits of those who afford him employment.

Here, then, is one inevitable cause, constantly operating to keep alive a struggle between productive capital and productive labour, with a constant tendency to bring both to a lower level:—because the disadvantage, under which they have to contend, arising from a difference in the price of the necessaries of life, is increased in proportion as the progressive improvement of rival nations approximates their manufacturing skill and industry more nearly to our own. Are not, then, the circumstances, which enhance the price of subsistence in this country, a strong reason why we should endeavour to lighten, as much as possible, other burthens which, by their direct operation, tend to aggravate this disadvantage? See to what an extent your Excise and Customs prove that you do not sufficiently attend to this consideration! Full three-fourths of your revenue are levied under these two heads; and by far the greatest proportion of that amount upon articles necessary, either for the subsistence, the clothing, or the humble comforts of the labourer; or of use in the fabrication of those articles to which his industry is devoted. Let any man look through the list of the Excise and Customs, even now that the beer and leather taxes are removed, and he will find in how great a degree this observation still applies. Candles, hops, licenses, malt, printed goods, soap, British spirits, tea, sugar, tobacco, rum, hemp, timber: here is an enumeration amounting to near 30,000,000*l.*; but the incidental burthen of which, in restraint, impediment, and vexatious interference, may well be estimated at 10,000,000*l.* more.

These are the consequences of monopoly in some cases, as tea for instance, and of the charge of collection, regulation, drawbacks, and such like interference in others. They are, perhaps,

unavoidable under the complication of a system, which can only guard against fraud and evasion in the collection of the revenue, by impeding the development of industry, and sacrificing the improvements of science.

It is a common remark, that the rich man does not require more food than his poorer neighbour; the difference between them must be in the quality. But, in many of the articles which I have enumerated, the consumption of the rich is less than that of the poor man. In others, his consumption may be greater, but in an amount altogether disproportioned to their relative means. The proportion, however, in this respect, is not so much the question now, as the different mode in which this system of taxation falls upon realized wealth, and upon productive industry. Every man's observation must satisfy him of the general truth of these remarks. It can scarcely be necessary that I should illustrate them in detail.

In proportion as prices and wages have fallen, has this class of taxes become not only more burthensome, but more vexatious, and more liable to evasion. Take for instance Soap: the duty during the war might be about 70 per cent. upon the raw materials; it is now from 120 to 140 per cent. If wages have fallen in the same proportion, how much heavier does this tax now press upon the labourer, and how much greater must be the temptation to resort to any means by which the duty may be avoided? If we advert to Sugar, we shall find that the duty, which was formerly one-half of, now exceeds the selling price. Looking to this article, upon which there has been no reduction of duty since the war, and considering the severe and general distress in which all West-India interests are involved, I cannot but regret that a reduction of the sugar duty seems now to be indefinitely postponed. As a measure of relief it is urgent. I still retain the opinion, which I have more than once pressed upon his Majesty's Government, that this relief might be given, without any great or permanent sacrifice of revenue.

It is not to sugar only that this observation would apply. A general revision would point out many other articles, but the subject is one too extensive and too minute for the present occasion. The more general considerations, to which I now claim the attention of the House, are these: first, that no other country in Europe has so large a proportion of its taxation bearing directly upon the incomes of labour and productive capital:—secondly, that in no other country, of the same extent, I think I might say in none of five times the extent of this kingdom, is there so large a mass of income, belonging to those classes who do not directly employ it in bringing forth the produce of labour:—thirdly, that no other country has so large a proportion of its taxation mort-

gaged;—in proportion to the amount of that mortgage are we interested in any measure which, without injustice to the mortgagee, would tend to lessen the absolute burthen of the mortgage:—fourthly, that from no other country in the world does so large a proportion of the class not engaged in production (including many of the wealthy) spend their incomes in foreign parts. I know I may be told, that, by taxing that income, you run the risk of driving them to withdraw their capital altogether. My answer is, first, that ninety-nine out of every hundred of these absentees have no such command over the source of their income;—secondly, that the danger is now of another and more alarming description,—that of the productive capitals of this country being transferred to other countries, where they would be secure of a more profitable return. The relief of industry is the remedy against that danger.

One of the objections made to any direct tax upon income, even limited, as I have described, to capital not directly employed in the pursuits of industry, is, that it may be very fit as a war measure, but that it is not suited to a state of peace. My answer is, that this proposition is too general. What may be very well adapted to a state of peace or war under given circumstances, may become inexpedient when the bearing of those circumstances is altogether changed. In war, the wages of labour and the profits of capital may be high. In peace, they may be greatly depressed. In the former supposition, taxes bearing upon industry will be more lightly felt; in the latter, their pressure will be very severe; and, if not alleviated, will daily become more so, by exhausting the very springs of that industry from which they are derived. Let gentlemen seriously weigh in their own minds, whether this be not the risk against which it is most earnest to provide.

I have already shown, upon higher authority than my own—that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—that the amount remitted by a change in our taxation, would be a very inadequate measure of the real saving, and contingent relief, to industry; whilst, on the other hand, the produce of the tax to be substituted would be commensurate with what it might subtract from the incomes of the classes, by which it would be paid. The landlord, the fundholder, the mortgagee, the annuitant of every description, would moreover be *directly* benefited, to the extent of his consumption of the articles upon which the present taxes might be reduced or abolished. Each would be *indirectly* benefited, by the stimulus and additional ease which would be given to the industrious classes. Take, for instance, the land-owner. Can any doubt, that in proportion to the relief afforded, would be the
and desire of the industrious classes to consume more of

all the productions of the soil, which constitute their habitual comforts and luxuries:—more meat,—more malt,—more cheese,—more butter,—and more of all the other articles which cannot be said to be of absolute and primary necessity? Can any man doubt, that the consumption of these articles is now checked, if not actually diminished, by the straitened circumstances of our labouring population? Should their condition become still harder,—and, in order to maintain our competition in the foreign market, I fear that, without the relief which I have suggested it must,—is it not obvious that the consumption of these articles, and, with the consumption the price, must decline?

Should this be the unfortunate career in which we are proceeding, we may have gleams of sunshine, but their transient brightness will not be sufficient to disperse the thickening gloom which will be gathering round us, and in which all interests and all classes will be finally enveloped. For the contentment of the poor man,—for the comfort of the middling classes,—for the enjoyment of the rich,—for the security of all, it becomes the paramount duty of those, to whom the welfare and happiness of the country are committed, well to probe the sources of our present difficulties; and if they are satisfied that they are produced in any considerable degree by the causes to which I have adverted, not to be tardy or timid in applying a remedy.

If I have dwelt upon these subjects at greater length than I had intended, I have done so because I have thought it my duty, as an unconnected member of Parliament, not to shrink from stating my views respecting them. The position of a minister in this House is very different from that of an individual. I know how difficult a thing it might be for Government, even if they concur in my views, to carry them into effect; and I am fully aware of all the inconvenience which would arise from their at all hinting at that concurrence, unless they were prepared to act upon it. All I can say is, that ours is a choice of difficulties, and that the course which I have suggested would, I sincerely believe, be most beneficial to the country. If these views are not entertained by others in this House, or sanctioned by public opinion out of doors, it would be vain to expect that they should lead, at present, to any practical result. But if, at any future day, a sense of the public interest should induce his Majesty's Government to act upon them, I shall be prepared to give my most cordial assistance and support, towards overcoming the various difficulties, which I am fully sensible must arise in carrying those views into effect, and towards conciliating the feelings of all who might continue adverse to their adoption.

In the course of this debate, allusion has frequently been made to possible improvements in the Banking System, as one means

of affording some relief to the country; and I understood my right honourable friend, the President of the Board of Trade, to say, that he expected much benefit from a revision of the system of Country Banks, and from giving publicity to their proceedings. I am friendly to publicity. But if it be required from banking establishments in the country, I trust that the same rule will be applied to the Bank of the State—the Bank of England. Had that system of publicity, of which my right honourable friend is the advocate, prevailed between 1824 and 1826, it would, in my opinion, have guarded us from the risk of such a calamity as that which was upon the point of taking place, at a period of profound peace, towards the close of the year 1825.

Far be it from me, in making this observation, to cast any reflection upon the Directors of the Bank of England. I know that they are zealous and disinterested in the management of the great trust reposed in them. But it is their duty, in that management, to look to the interests of the body of proprietors whom they represent. It is the duty of this House, on the other hand, if they think fit to grant a monopoly, to surround and fence it with such regulations, as may prevent the public interests from being prejudiced, by being placed in collision with the interests of those, upon whom the monopoly is conferred.

The first of all our cares, in revising the Banking system of the country, must be to satisfy ourselves that nothing is omitted, in the way of precaution, which may tend to secure the public against a possible recurrence of that greatest of all calamities, another suspension of cash payments. I cannot pass over even this opportunity of repeating my doubts, whether the affairs of the Bank are conducted with a sufficient regard to this paramount object. With their original capital all locked up upon loan to Government, they have, at the same time, nearly the whole of their outstanding credit resting upon securities, equally unavailable. The sound system of banking, on the contrary, would appear to require, that the amount of their issues should be more immediately within their command, as the only certain protection,—for themselves, against those emergencies that will occur, even in time of peace,—for the public, against a recurrence of the dreadful effects of such a panic as that of 1825.

There is no saying how soon, should trade revive with more than its usual activity, we may again witness another season of excitement, and extravagant speculation. Should an unfavourable state of the foreign exchanges be the consequence, their turning against us would, for a time, rather encourage than repress that spirit of speculation. The salutary check, under such a contingency, can only be applied by the prudence of the Bank of England. But how is that check to be called into action, with-

out the risk of panic, if both the capital and credit of the Bank are locked up in dead weight, in exchequer bills, in mortgages upon land, in an advance to the rebuilding of London Bridge?—all of them, I admit, assets most perfectly solid and secure, but all of that inconvertible description, upon which no banking establishment, I think, having the whole of its outstanding engagements payable upon demand, ought to rest so large a portion of its liabilities. This, however, is a fit subject for a separate investigation, and into which, therefore, I will not go more at large on the present occasion.

I have detained the House, I am aware, longer than any member, having no official duties to discharge, can be justified in claiming their attention. My apology must be, in part, that I have had to defend measures, for which I am more immediately responsible, as having brought them forward when I was in office; and, partly, that I have thought this a fit occasion for stating the views which I entertain of the present condition of the country. I cordially thank the House for the indulgence with which they have heard me upon these important topics.

After all—do what we will, say what we may—the immense sacrifices and unparalleled exertions of the last long war must tell, in abridging the comforts, and adding to the difficulties, of the present generation. Fifteen years have now elapsed since that war was brought to a glorious termination. From its commencement I have been more or less in public life. In the course of it, there is scarcely a conceivable trial of fortitude to which the country, and those who administered its affairs, were not exposed. Mutiny in our fleets,—civil war in Ireland,—the stoppage of the Bank,—defection of our allies,—the overthrow and subjugation of all the great powers of Europe by the enemy to which we were opposed,—our commerce placed under an interdict in every part of the civilized world,—these are some of the evils of which, having witnessed the first overwhelming shock, I shall retain through life a vivid recollection. But, amid all the scenes of alarm and despondency, I might almost say despair, occasioned by this succession of calamities, I tax my memory in vain for one single act of weakness or dishonour, of spoliation or bad faith. Never did such expedients suggest themselves to those great and firm minds that then presided over the destinies of the country. If in vain I tax my memory for one act of that description, upon which any man, the most envious of my country's fame, can put his finger and say, "this is a blot in your annals," give me leave to add, that should you, in an evil hour, venture to debase your currency, you will commit an act of fraud at which that finger of scorn will point for ever after, as the hour of your shame and humiliation; and that the period will not then be dis-

tant, in which you will deeply repent, but repent too late, the irretrievable consequences of so ruinous a proceeding.

For myself, I once more enter my protest against such an infringement of the national faith. I cannot vote either in support of the original motion, or of the amendment. Taken abstractedly, they both embrace too wide a field for any useful enquiry. But my greater objection is, that I cannot separate the wish for enquiry, from the grounds upon which that wish stands recommended to the House, by almost every member who has supported it. Again, to the form of the enquiry, as recommended in the original motion, I have an insuperable objection. In the mode recommended by the amendment I might have concurred, had it been brought forward upon different grounds, and been more limited in its objects. From enquiries of this latter nature I expect much benefit; and his Majesty's Government do not appear to be adverse to them. They have already consented to grant a committee to enquire into the condition of the poor in Ireland. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has given notice of his intention to bring in a Bill to regulate the Dead Weight system; and has said, that he shall have no objection to refer that Bill, together with the whole subject, to a committee up stairs. My honourable friend, the member for Dover, has a notice on the order book, for a select committee to investigate the effect of the present system of our Taxation, upon the productive classes of the country. Whether the proposed committee will be granted or not, I cannot tell; but this I know, that whenever my honourable friend shall bring forward his motion, he shall have my warmest support. We have already a committee sitting to enquire into the affairs of the East-India Company, and into their monopoly of the trade with China. In like manner, I hope we shall have a committee to enquire into the Banking System of the country, in connection with the renewal of the charter of the Bank of England. It is by enquiries thus limited to specific objects, that we shall arrive at more satisfactory results, than by going into a committee, purporting to be for an enquiry into the causes of distress generally,—a species of enquiry which, in my judgment, could not possibly lead to any good, but which, in the expectation of its promoters, might lead to what I consider the greatest possible evil,—the unsettling and disturbing the present monetary system of the country.

JEWS RELIEF BILL.

MAY 17th, 1830.

On the 4th of May, Mr. Huskisson presented a petition from the Bankers, Merchants, and other inhabitants of Liverpool, praying that the Bill brought in by Mr. Robert Grant, for the relief of persons of the Jewish persuasion from all civil disabilities, might pass into a law. On the 17th, the order of the day for the second reading was opposed by General Gascoyne, who moved "that it be read a second time that day six months." After the amendment had been supported by Lord Belgrave, the Earl of Darlington, Mr. Trant, and Mr. George Bankes; and the original motion by Mr. Mildmay, Sir Edward Dering, Sir Robert Wilson, Mr. O'Connell, and Lord John Russell,

Mr. HUSKISSON said:—Knowing, Sir, the ability and the power of argument possessed by my honourable friend who has introduced this subject to the notice of the House, and believing that his endeavour would be crowned with success, I came down with the intention of giving a silent vote in support of the Bill; and I should not have broken through that resolution, had it not been for what has fallen from my gallant colleague, and from a noble lord, in reference to a petition which I had the honour of presenting, on a former evening, from the town of Liverpool, in favour of this bill. On that occasion, my gallant colleague admitted, that it was both numerous and respectably signed; but he now says, that some of the signatures to it were obtained through the great influence possessed by the Jews in Liverpool; and the noble lord who has adverted to the petition, seems to think, that the Jews can dispose of the feelings of the trading classes of society as they please. Now, Sir, I happen to know something of Liverpool, and I really believe there is scarcely a part of the country in which the Jews possess less influence. They are principally retail traders, and are therefore not likely to possess great influence in that town. The sentiments contained in the petition are the genuine opinion of the individuals who signed it, and they should be taken as the genuine sentiments of the Christians of Liverpool, in favour of the great principle, asserted by the House in the instance of the Catholics and of the Dissenters. My gallant friend has, indeed, confessed, that the Roman Catholics were entitled to some favour, because their

religion was an ancient one. But if the Roman Catholics have any claim, on account of the antiquity of their faith, he will not surely consider the Jews less entitled to favour on the same score. And when my gallant friend tells us, that our ancestors were opposed to all innovation, he seems to have forgotten, that they brought about the Reformation, which changed the religion of the country—that they effected a Revolution, which altered the succession to the throne—and that they expelled a King, because he endeavoured to destroy the liberties of the country.

With regard to what has fallen from the noble lord, respecting my opposition to the bill for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, I am sure that every gentleman who heard me upon that occasion will bear me out in the statement, that I did not oppose it from any desire to exclude the Dissenters, but because I was apprehensive that partial concession might be injurious to the success of the great and general measure of Catholic emancipation, which was then about to be brought forward, and has since been happily accomplished.

I am ready to admit, that the present question is not one of paramount importance, or of absolute necessity: but upon principle, the concession ought to be made; and as a uniform supporter of the claims of the Catholics, I cannot refuse my assent to it. The arguments which I have heard this night against the emancipation of the Jews, are precisely the same, *mutatis mutandis*, as those which, for the last thirty years, I have been in the habit of hearing urged against the emancipation of the Catholics. But, while I admit that no such over-riding necessity is apparent in this case, I maintain that the last blot of this kind ought to be removed from the statute-book. When this measure shall have passed, the great principle of general toleration will be completed, and the Jews in this country will be placed on the same footing as those in France and the Netherlands.

The honourable member for Wexford, who has spoken so well that I hope to hear him often, admitted the propriety of admitting the Jews to all other stations, civil and military; but he would exclude them from seats in Parliament. Now this, Sir, is a sort of liberality which I cannot understand. The honourable member would give them the power of the sword, and the power of instructing youth; but he would make them, by his exclusion, the enemy of that legislature, which it is necessary for the safety of the state that youth should be taught to respect, and soldiers implicitly to obey.

Something has been said as to the manner in which my honourable friend has framed his measure. And it is true, that it ought to be a relief to the Jews from all their disabilities, and to place them on the same footing with the Protestant Dissenters

and the Roman Catholics. But does it follow, that if the House shall go into a committee, it must necessarily adopt all that has been proposed by my honourable friend? For myself, I am prepared to support my honourable friend's views to their full extent. If, however, the House should go into the committee, and a proviso be introduced, not to allow the Jews the privilege of admission into Parliament, however undesirable, and uncalled for, that proviso might, in my opinion, be, yet still I am not one of those who would think that the bill ought not to be persevered in, on account of such an objection. Honourable gentlemen may ask, why should I agree to this? But I would ask them, do they recollect the year 1812, when a bill was brought in to grant the Roman Catholics all that they have since obtained? That bill was read a first and a second time. It went to a committee, and an amendment was then agreed to, to exclude them from sitting in Parliament, and on that amendment having been carried, the bill was, as I thought, very unwisely withdrawn. The better course would have been, for the friends of the measure, to have taken what they could have obtained. If a proviso to the same effect should be now introduced, I should deprecate it, and think it unwise; but, considering this bill as a measure of justice, and of relief to all the parties who are suffering from having their rights withheld, I would still proceed to pass it.

I therefore trust, Sir, that the bill will be allowed to be read a second time. It is most certain, that it has attracted considerable notice; and honourable gentlemen have been told, that they will rue the support they are giving it, when they return to their constituents; but I will, nevertheless, support it, as I did the measure of Catholic emancipation, without any other consideration than that which guided my decision upon that question. Again, then, I will express a hope that the bill will pass, and form the consummation of that course of liberality, which will immortalize the present Parliament.

The house divided: For the second reading, 165. Against it, 228.

